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TO PALESTINE.

The still, dark, southern midnights dream,
Low brooding on the breeze,
Of lands where white auroras gleam
Across the frozen seas.

The icebergs rise, and, white and grand,
Sail southward night and day,
And die of strong desire to stand
Beside the palm and bay.

Fair Palestine! I turn to thee
With longings hot and deep;
Upon thy bosom I would lay
My troubled heart to sleep. L. B. H.

Jasper Onslow's Wife.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

EDEN AND THE SERPENT.

A goodly apple rotten at the heart—
Oh, what a goodly outside falsehood hath.
—*Shakespeare.*

"So you never heard a word against Doris Carlyon—eh, Winstanley?"

"Not one."

"Nor I in the sense that the world usually gives to stories against people, and yet—"

"Yet what?"

"I believe yonder splendid creature to be as wicked a woman as ever cursed the earth with her presence!"

"Dormer!"

"I do!"

"Why?"

"It is easier to feel than to tell. I never fell into her toils; but I have seen the evil she has wrought on others. I have seen men pine, and fade, and dwindle, and their purses shrink under the influence of her evil eye. I have seen bright-faced, light-hearted young fellows, like that poor sentimental young fool there, lose their hearts and their senses to her witcheries and her graces in their madness, till the end has come. I tell you more than one death lies at the door of yonder mocking devil, who looks with such a wealth of pretended love into Jasper Onslow's blinded, besotted eyes!"

The speakers were two gentlemen in the quiet, unostentatious attire of men of rank and position in the morning—the place was the lawn of an English country house, whose mistress lay swinging in a hammock between two noble trees just out of earshot of where they stood. Sole and undisputed mistress of Kingcolm Grange was the beautiful woman, who seemed far more foreign than English as she lay there toying with a fan of bright-colored feathers, which looked like a tropical bird as she waved it to and fro. She was foreign—by birth, at least. Born in Mexico of a Mexican mother, she had only within a few years come to England to take possession of the magnificent fortune and estate which her father, a second son, had never thought to inherit. She had scarcely any relations. Mr. Carlyon's father had been an only child. His mother had only one sister, a widow, now living with his daughter, and there had been no children born to his father but himself and his elder brother, so Doris, his daughter, was about as lonely a young woman, as far as relations were concerned, as any one upon earth.

She did not seem to mind. She wanted no one, she said, and pursued the even tenor of her way as she listed. She chose to live alone at Kingcolm Grange with her aunt, and rejected all the proposals made to her—and they were many, for England is a fortune-hunting land—with infinite scorn. She didn't mean to marry, she declared; she had enough to live upon, and she wasn't going to tie herself to any man on earth. She never wanted for society at the Grange. She had the knack of making her house dangerously attractive, and her wonderful beauty would have brought men to her side had her riches been of no more value than the withered leaves that strewed the park in the autumn.

But, somehow, the Grange and its mistress got an evil reputation. Not a word was ever breathed against the fair fame of Doris Carlyon, and Mrs. Bellew, her aunt, was propriety itself; but wives with beauty-loving husbands, and mothers with susceptible sons, learned to think of Kingcolm as a dangerous place, and its mistress a woman to be avoided if possible. Very young men invariably fell in love with the Mexican heiress, and one or two ugly stories were afloat of broken lives and ruined fortunes, shattered by her heartlessness. One uglier than all the rest was in Ernest Dormer's heart as he spoke so bitterly of the lady on that sunny summer's morning in the garden of the Grange. It was a common story enough, of a young man, little more than a boy, lured on by a woman older and wiser in the world's ways than he, till occupation, fortune, life itself almost, were sacrificed for the sake of keeping near her; and when he asked her to reward him for his devotion and crown his love with the hand that he pressed to his burning lips, Doris Carlyon laughed softly and musically, and called him a foolish boy.

He was a musician, this boyish adorer of the haughty lady, and he had been bidden to Kingcolm that evening that he might sing to her and her guests his own sweet songs and passionate scenas. And she had flattered him, and let him look into her eyes, and whispered soft nothings into his enraptured ears, till the young man was fairly beside himself with love, and thought the goal was won for which he had been striving.

IN THE TOILS.

So he followed her into the conservatory, and there, in the dim light, amid the scent of sweet flowers and the flash of silvery fountains, he had poured out his hopes, his wishes, his aspirations, and she had met them with careless words of light ridicule.

The light had died out of his hopeful blue eyes, and there was a choking in the musical young voice; but the answer was steady enough.

"I have been mistaken, then, Miss Carlyon?"

"Of course you have," she replied. "Come in, and let us go to supper, and don't talk nonsense any more."

"I will not; be sure of that."

They went in and supped, and Ronald Graham had never talked more wittily, nor laughed more merrily, than on that night. After supper he sang again—sang as he had never sung before—with notes that those who heard him remembered to their dying day, and then went home to his solitary lodgings, and in the silence and darkness of the lonely night took his grief and despair over the threshold of the next world.

They told Doris Carlyon how he died, and she shrugged her white shoulders, and said she always thought the poor young fellow was a little mad; and then she went abroad, and flitted like a butterfly through some of the continental cities till the gossip over the affair should have died away.

But it lived still in the hearts of many, notably in that of Ernest Dormer, who had known the young musician, and it was uppermost in his mind to-day as he watched his cousin, for he was "next of kin" to the mistress of Kingcolm Grange, and would inherit should she die unmarried, or in the event of her marrying and having no children.

The world said it was a pity she did not make a match of it with her cousin, and wondered not a little that Mr. Dormer was so insensible to the charms of his fair cousin, but so it was. Doris found her wiles had no effect on him, and hated him most cordially, and he returned the compliment in his heart, and would not have married her had she been ten times as wealthy as she was.

He and his friend, Cuthbert Winstanley, were paying a short visit to the Grange on this particular day, and it was in answer to some remark about Doris not marrying that the conversation began.

She looked harmless enough as she lay there in her favorite lounge—a hammock she had brought with her from Mexico, and scandalized her aunt by using—and beautiful enough to embody a poet's dream. She was petite and slight, and looked several years younger than her real age of twenty-six; a casual observer would not have taken her for more than eighteen. Her complexion was dark, her eyes black and piercing, but capable of unutterable softness, and her hair was of the very darkest shade of brown, black in the shadow where she is lying now, and falling over her shoulders in long, rippling masses. People were very fond of accusing her of coquetry in thus wearing her hair loose; but its luxuriance defied all bands and combs, and would not be restrained, so she was fain to let it hang as it would. Her limbs were models for a sculptor, and her dusky skin glowed with a warm hue, which made painters long to transfer it to their canvas.

It was a painter that sat by her side now, gazing at her lovely face, and drinking in every accent that fell from her panting lips. This man was Jasper Onslow, a scion of an ancient and honored family in the west of England, but without a penny save what he earned to support that honor. Chance had flung him in the way of Doris Carlyon in London, and she had chosen to patronize him as she had patronized Ronald Graham before him.

"And she will ruin him," her cousin said bitterly to his friend, as he watched her tapping with her fan on the velvet coat the artist wore.

"You are very hard on her," said Cuthbert Winstanley. "If he is in love with her it is no wonder. She is gloriously beautiful!"

"So was Lucifer when he talked to Adam and Eve in Eden, according to Milton," said Ernest Dormer. "Your true demon is always bewitching. Come along, Winstanley; the dinner bell will ring soon, and our fair hostess is particular on the subject of dress."

They strolled away, leaving the two under the shade of the chestnut trees, with Mrs. Bellew in proper proximity to play propriety, and Miss Muriel Chisholm sitting on a low chair at a little distance busy at work, but ready to attend if she were called upon.

Muriel Chisholm was a clergyman's daughter, orphaned and penniless by her father's sudden death, and Doris Carlyon had offered her the post of "companion"—Heaven save the mark!—at Kingcolm Grange.

Muriel was not unhappy, though her duties were multifarious and her patroness capricious. Miss Carlyon looked upon her tall, fair, blue-eyed companion as a foil to her own dazzling beauty; but in truth the plainly dressed, quiet, industrious Muriel was a very dangerous rival.

She was well educated, and had some musical abilities, and without knowing it, was one of the chief attractions at the Grange. Men hovered about her and praised her beauty, and paid her the silent homage which tells of deeper feeling than that which shows itself in eloquence.

But Muriel cared for none of them. She had no heart to give—it was gone out of her own keeping, to the man who sat by Doris Carlyon's side, and listened with the delirium of unreasoning love to every word which fell from her lips.

"And you would really like to paint my portrait, Mr. Onslow?" Miss Carlyon said, fanning herself languidly. "Do you think my face worth transferring to your canvas?"

"Worth it! Oh, madam, I never saw a face that would make such a glorious picture. I should like to paint you as—"

"As what?"

"As an angel!" the artist blurted out.

He was clumsily nervous with the passion that was thrilling his every nerve for this woman and her beauty.

Doris Carlyon laughed. Her laughter was like music in its melodious sweetness. Just so she had laughed when Ronald Graham had turned away from her, with death in his heart, to take his last look upon the world and its misery. Just so she would laugh if Jasper Onslow's mad love should lead him in the same path.

"An angel!" she said; "nonsense. Angelic purity is not my role at all. Miss Chisholm, there, is much more angelic in appearance than I am. Fair hair, big, sleepy blue eyes, and a skin like ivory. Those are the requisites to make an angel on canvas, are they not?"

"They are not my ideal points," he said, with meaning. "Your warm color and speaking eyes, your gleaming hair, are much more what I should paint for a celestial being than Miss Chisholm's style. Not but what she is very handsome."

"Handsome—yes, with a statuesque sort of beauty. She has one handsome point—her hair. Did you notice its color?"

"Not particularly."

"It is true golden. 'Threads of living gold,' as some poet has it. I am sure you would like to paint it. Suppose you put us both into one picture. Muriel."

"Yes, Miss Carlyon."

"Come here, my dear."

Unhesitatingly Muriel arose. She really liked her employer, and was ever willing to please her.

"Mr. Onslow is talking of painting an angel. I have been recommending you as a model. Oh, don't look indignant. He wanted me to sit for the celestial spirit, only it would be too ridiculous. My charms, if I have any, are decidedly too much of the opposite order."

"Miss Carlyon has truly described your hair, Miss Chisholm," Jasper Onslow said, with all an artist's enthusiasm. "It is indeed 'threads of living gold.'"

He began to wonder as he spoke that he had never noticed how beautiful Muriel Chisholm was before.

"Show it to him, Muriel," Doris Carlyon said. "Don't be shy; there's no one here but ourselves. Stoop your head—lower—ah, that's it."

She pulled the shapely head down to the level of her own, and deftly extracting a couple of hairpins, sent Muriel's golden locks tumbling over her shoulders in a shower of sunny threads.

The young painter uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight. In all his experience of models he had never seen such beautiful hair as that of the companion at Kingcolm Grange.

CHAPTER II.

NIL DESPERANDUM.

She gives thee a garland woven fair,
Take care!
It is a fool's cap for thee to wear.
Beware! beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee.—*Longfellow.*

"Thank you, Muriel, my dear. That will do. Mr. Onslow, you have made her blush," Doris Carlyon said, as Muriel hastily turned away, and returned to the house to twist up her magnificent hair. "How many Englishwomen would give ten years of their lives for such splendid locks as that. Now, what do you think of her for an angel?"

"I have not changed my opinion, Miss Carlyon," the artist replied.

"Pshaw! you flatter me. Help me down, if you please. Thank you. You have just the strength of arm and lightness of touch that a squire of dames should have. My poor father used to say that mounting a horse and getting in and out of a hammock well were true marks of a thoroughbred woman. I think it all depends upon her cavalier, don't you?"

"There are women in the world, Miss Carlyon, who do all things gracefully."

"And I am one of them! Thank you for the implied compliment. It is time to dress. Go and beautify yourself, and we will talk about the portrait after dinner."

"Then you will really let me paint you?"

"Let you! I am only too flattered by the suggestion."

He lifted the little hand to his lips, and went to his room, his brain whirling with the intoxication of her looks and words.

"She will learn to love me," he muttered, as he strove to select the garments he looked best in, and arrange his toilet so as to seem good in her eyes. "I saw it in her face; I heard it in her sweet voice. Oh, Doris! Doris! what a heaven this earth will be to me when blessed with your love!"

He was a handsome, brown-haired, gray-eyed young Englishman, this Jasper Onslow; lithe and straight, with a voice that had a pleasant, truthful ring in it, and a hand that gave an earnest, honest grip when it met another man's. The good had not been crushed out of his nature yet, whatever of evil the future might bring to him.

Doris Carlyon thought, as she sat before her glass with a triumphant smile curling her rosy lips—

"Am I so very handsome?" she asked herself, and smiled again as the faithful glass flashed back a reply. "Well, he's a nice young fellow, and I like him very much as yet. I only hope he won't let his imagination run away with him, that's all, and make things unpleasant in the future."

And Muriel Chisholm, in her remote little room, had her head full of the same image.

"Why can't she let him alone?" she murmured, bitterly, as she coiled up her hair, and arrayed herself in a gray silk dress, which made her look like a princess in disguise. "She has men enough at her beck and call. Can she not leave me this one? Am I going mad, I wonder, that I pine and moan for the love of a man who has never spoken an unnecessary word to me in his life—who has neither eyes, ears nor tongue for any save another woman, my mistress. Muriel Chisholm, have you no more pride, no more sense, than to be such a degraded fool?"

She stamped her shapely foot upon the carpet, and made a defiant mouth at herself in the glass, and then finished her dressing, adding a blush rose to the knot of ribbon at her corsage, the only ornament she wore.

The gentlemen looked up as Miss Carlyon's companion entered the drawing-room before dinner—one and all—with a feeling of surprise.

It had never struck any of them before what a singularly handsome woman Muriel Chisholm was, and after the manner of mankind they began to pay double court to her the minute they found it out.

Doris Carlyon was not pleased at the homage. She liked every man to be at her feet, and she scowled at the beautiful face near which her cousin and his friend hovered, only kept from openly flouting her companion by the knowledge that Jasper Onslow at least saw only her, had eyes only for her and her beauty.

The picture scheme was settled before the party separated for the night. Jasper Onslow was to paint Doris Carlyon—to produce such a picture of her as would send all rival artists mad with envy of his luck in having such a sitter, and his talent in transferring her charms to canvas.

Ernest Dormer and Cuthbert Winstanley were to leave Kingcolm on the morrow; but Mrs. Grundy would be quite at rest on the score of propriety, for Mrs. Bellew was a perfect dragon in the matter of a duenna's duties, and no harm would come of the painter's presence at the Grange.

A small pavilion, which had been built to please the whim of some former owner of the place, was to be fitted up immediately as a studio, and a suite of apartments in the house were to be set apart for him to live in.

Doris Carlyon was as pleased over the prospect as a child with a new toy, and Jasper Onslow seemed intoxicated with delight.

Mrs. Bellew chattered, and gave her opinion. Muriel Chisholm said never a word; but her pretty lip curled scornfully as the plans were discussed.

"How long will the fancy last?" she asked herself. "Till she has befooled and blinded him, till he will have no heart, no soul, for anything in the world after he loses her! Oh, if I could save him—if I could only warn him. But he will not listen to me—will not look at me."

He would listen to no one. He had no eyes, no ears, for any warning.

Ernest Dormer made an opportunity of speaking to him before they retired that night, but it was no use.

"I can't see a fine young fellow like that, going headlong to the deuce, and not try to stop him," he said to his friend Winstanley. "I shall talk to him."

"You'll waste your breath," the other replied. "He's about as far gone as a man can be and keep his senses."

"I don't believe he has kept them; but I'll try what I can do. She sha'n't drive him to cut his throat, as that poor young fellow did two years ago, if I can help it."

But Jasper Onslow would not be advised—would not listen to a word Ernest Dormer could say. They were gentle words that he spoke too; hinting nothing against the fair fame of his cousin, but simply warning the artist of the peril there was for him in seeing too much of Doris Carlyon.

"You are a gentleman and her guest," Jasper Onslow replied, with bitter scorn. "Were Miss Carlyon worse than your foulest slander could paint, your lips should be sealed on the subject of her shortcomings."

"I have nothing to say on that score—I only want to warn you. You are younger a year or two in life than she is—younger by a hundred years in the world's ways and wiles. Stop before it is too late. I tell you, Jasper Onslow, my cousin's beauty has driven men mad before now—sent them to their graves in agony. Save yourself from such a fate before the time has passed when you can step unharmed out of the fatal toils."

"Were I out of her house, and you anything but her guest and cousin," Jasper Onslow said, passionately, "I would tell you what I think of you. I would make you answer for your words as one man should to another. I am powerless here. I would not disturb her pure life with any brawls of mine; but a day may come—it will—it shall!"

"When I am to fight a duel with you on the score of Doris Carlyon's honor? Very good. We will fix the day from the time when you shall have left this place—as you will, mark me—broken in spirit, ruined in pocket, and bankrupt in the last thing left to move the love of a woman. I can wait for the day, Mr. Onslow."

"Slanderer! liar!" hissed the young artist, springing at the throat of his adviser, who caught him by the wrists, and held him as in a vice.

"Stop, Mr. Onslow," he said, calmly, "if it comes to a fight I am a stronger man than you. Oxford training, and a tussle with a barge now and then, make muscles of iron. You had better not try and establish Miss Carlyon's good name by brute force. Your delicate hands would not be fit for painting for some time if you did."

"Scoundrel!"

"That am I none—you will know it some day. Don't interfere, Cuthbert, old boy. Mr. Onslow is not going to disturb his inamorata's pure life by any brawls of his."

"Gentlemen!"

The voice was Doris Carlyon's, and they turned to see her standing on the threshold. Whether she had heard the last words of her cousin or not, she betrayed not the slightest consciousness, but stood looking into the room, her red lips parted in amazement, and the brilliant gems in her dark hair gleaming like flashes of light.

"Is it possible you were quarrelling?" she asked, reproachfully.

"I was giving Mr. Onslow a piece of advice, that was all," said Ernest Dormer, gravely; "and like most useful necessary things it was unpalatable, that was all."

"Mr. Onslow is under my special protection, and I can't have him worried," she said, archly. "He can't possibly paint a good picture if he is tormented with advice and suggestions. I was looking for you," she added to the young artist. "I want to ask you some questions about the things I am to order. Will you come to my boudoir, or are you too much engaged with these gentlemen?"

"I have no engagement but your pleasure," he replied, rising, with a delighted look. "I am always at your service."

"And dearly you'll pay for the privilege some day," said Ernest Dormer, as the door closed behind them. "Poor young fool! he's in the toils as fast as ever was a fly in the web of a spider; but I wash my hands of him from this hour."

Doris Carlyon led the way to her fairy-like boudoir, all satin, and lace, and soft cushions, and intoxicating perfumes, and pointed to a pile of cushions beside a soft lounging chair.

"Sit there at my feet," she said, shortly, "and tell me what it was all about."

Jasper Onslow sank at her feet, and looked up into her face.

"It was nothing," he said.

"It was something. I heard enough in the minute I stood at that door to tell me that. What has Ernest Dormer been saying about me?"

"Lies!"

"Are you sure of that?"

She passed her jewelled hand over his head as she spoke, and her touch sent the blood leaping through all his veins with a fever akin to madness.

"Am I sure?" he replied. "Am I sure of my own life—sure that I lie here in the

light of your angel eyes? I wish I was as sure of Heaven.

"He slandered me then?"

"Foully; and he shall dearly pay for it some day."

"It was generous of him," she said, bitterly. "A woman alone, as I am, should be shielded by her defenceless position from a man's slander. My cousin hates me," she went on, repeating the caress, "because—"

"Because?" he questioned, growing bolder under the magnetic touch of that little hand.

"Because I will not give my hand, heart, and fortune, that is all. He would leave me no friends if he could alienate them. You will not let him prejudice you."

"I?"

"You will not let his words sink into your heart, and make you turn from me? I am a lonely woman, Mr. Onslow, and to have a friend to whom I can talk is a strange new joy for me. You are my friend, are you not?"

He seized her hand and kissed it passionately, mumbling something of his adoration, his love for her; but she went on, unheeding him—

"Mrs. Bellew is very kind, and Muriel Chisholm is a very nice, well-behaved girl, but we are not kindred spirits—we have no subjects in common. I shall like to think of you as my friend, Mr. Onslow, and when your picture is finished to have a warmer feeling for it than for a mere purchased portrait, paid for at so much a sitting."

"I would be more than friend to you, Miss Carlyon—I would lay down my life for you if the sacrifice would serve you."

"I believe you would."

She bent her head as she spoke till her flowing ringlets touched his cheek.

"Oh, that you would let me live wholly for you," he said, in a low tone. "Let me be your slave, your lacquey. Give me one word of hope, Miss Carlyon, that some day I may be something more to you than Jasper Onslow, the poor painter."

"I will say two words to you, Mr. Onslow."

Again she stroked his curly hair and looked into his eyes.

"What are they?"

"Nil desperandum."

He met the look she gave him with a glance of unutterable fondness, and drew her lips down to meet his own just as Muriel Chisholm appeared in the doorway, gazing at them with proud, scornful eyes.

CHAPTER III.

AWAKENED.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall,
The guilt of blood is at your door,
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
At last you fixed a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.
—*Tennyson.*

Muriel Chisholm said never a word as she watched that given and received caress. They did not see her. Doris Carlyon was looking down into the upturned eyes that were devouring her face with a feeling of triumph in even that poor victory, and Jasper Onslow was in the fool's paradise which comes to all lovers with the first granted kiss from the object of their passion.

"How long will it last?" she murmured. "How long must I, who love him, who would die almost for what he has just given her, look on and see it? Fool that I am! Any other woman would go out into the world and forget him, even if she had to face beggary and starvation to get away."

But Muriel had not the moral courage to do this. Apart from her patroness at the Grange, she had really no friends. Doris Carlyon was a kind and indulgent mistress. Muriel slept as softly and fared as sumptuously as Miss Carlyon did herself, and was treated by her as an equal. She had been brought up in comfort, if not in luxury, and she had the keen appreciation of the good things of this life that your stately, golden-haired beauties generally have.

She liked to stretch her fair round limbs on soft couches, and to array herself in fine linen and lace. She liked her bath-room, and her warm, carpeted bed-room, with its fire in the winter, and its airy draperies and rose-covered window in summer. She liked a well-spread table, and the pleasant society of an attractive house, and she knew that in the outer world there would be none of these things for her.

So she stayed on at Kingcolm, striving to crush out what she deemed the madness in her heart, and to shut her eyes to the sight of Jasper Onslow's infatuation.

She was very useful as a model—always at hand when she was wanted, either to play propriety at the sittings, or to serve as a foil to Miss Carlyon's dark beauty in some fanciful sketch. He made many a picture of them in those fleeting days, wherein Doris Carlyon was always idealized into some exalted heroine, while the fair face of her companion was made to serve as model for something to enhance her beauty.

If he sketched a ministering angel, Muriel Chisholm was the degraded object of the beauty's bounty, or any scene of female rivalry, she was the vanquished and Doris the victor. He made faithful portraits for all that, and Muriel's fair beauty shone out from his canvas and drawing-board with a calm triumph of its own.

"You don't flatter Muriel," Miss Carlyon said to him one day, when he had depicted her in gorgeous array bestowing charity on Muriel in rags and squalor. "Do paint her in a decent dress for once. She must be tired of seeing herself such a miserable object."

"I am never tired of being of service," Muriel said, demurely. "Mr. Onslow is only practising in these sketches. I might object to hang on the exhibition walls in such a guise; but he does not propose to honor me so far."

"Indeed, I should like to," the artist said, with enthusiasm. "You would make a splendid—let me see—Titania."

"Thank you—in love with an ass," she said, with the slightest possible touch of bitterness in her tone. "There are a great many Titanias in the world, Mr. Onslow. I don't think I should like to be exhibited as a type of the race. Besides, I am a great many sizes too large for a fairy. A fairy queen of my proportions would be far too stupendous for belief."

"It was your face, Miss Chisholm. You are the very type of Shakspeare's fairy queen about the head."

"You are welcome to my head whenever you like to paint it; but I think Miss Carlyon's portrait will exhaust all your energies for next year's exhibition. If you want a model when you have exhausted her charms you may rely on me."

"Muriel is a strange, blunt girl," Doris Carlyon said, as her companion walked away. "She says such odd things."

"She is rude, I think," he replied, "and inclined to sneer. I shall never exhaust your charms if I stay here forever."

"Oh, you mustn't do that," she said, gayly, "or what will Mrs. Grundy say?"

"Not now, perhaps, but—"

"But what?"

"In the future, when—"

"Don't talk of the future now. Your present business is to paint my portrait. I have arranged a place for it already in the great drawing-room, at the end where the light falls so well for rich colors. My grandmother hangs there now, but I shall depose the old lady and take her place."

No wonder Jasper Onslow was intoxicated, and could think of nothing but her and her beauty. He grew feverish and restless, and could neither eat, drink, nor sleep save by fits and starts.

Doris Carlyon chose to be painted in a rich, trailing robe of creamy-white, with a knotted sash of deep crimson, and crimson flowers in her hair. It was a strange, garish mixture of colors, but it was wonderfully becoming to her, and suited her better than the gorgeous Eastern costume the artist sketched out for her to assume.

"I don't want to look like a stage heroine," she said; "the simpler the better. A dress of no particular fashion is always the best for a portrait."

The days wore on, and Christmas came and went, and a gay company assembled at Kingcolm Grange, and still the portrait was not finished, and Jasper Onslow was still a guest in the house of his patroness.

It was not altogether his fault that he got on no faster. Doris Carlyon's caprices were numerous, and she was always calling him away from his work for some other service, or refusing to sit on the most trifling pretext.

Sometimes she would look so coldly on him that his heart would sink to the lowest depths of despair; then she would raise him to the seventh heaven of happiness with a word and a smile.

He lived in a perpetual whirl of excitement, enough to have worn out the nerves and brain of a stronger man, and the end came at last. Doris Carlyon wearied of her protegé, and of the blind adoration which gave her no more amusement than the struggles of a tortured mouse give to a satisfied cat.

"I must put an end to it," she said. "I want to go abroad and shut up Kingcolm. I will give him a hint to make haste with that picture."

It was to another admirer she spoke in the budding of the early spring, when the snow-drifts were sparkling the ground with white, and the bare trees were beginning to thrust out green buds in token of the summer that was to come.

"He's a deuced long time over it," the gentleman drawled. "He knows when he's well off, and doesn't want to move, I fancy."

"I daresay."

"You'll have to turn him out. Some fellows can never take a hint."

"Mr. Onslow is singularly obtuse in taking hints," Doris said, coolly. "I have given him plenty that any other man would have taken. I must speak more plainly, I suppose."

"Yes, you shall speak more plainly this time," hissed a voice at her side, and springing from the shadow of a window curtain, Jasper Onslow stood before them. "Don't go, Mr. Marston," for the gentleman would have left the room; "you may hear all I have to say. Miss Carlyon is my promised wife."

"Sir!"

"Oh, don't look so astonished. If I hadn't accidentally overheard her words and guess just now, I should have kept the secret as she has made me do till now. When that portrait is finished I shall be master here, and till that time I claim the permission to remain her guest. Neither you nor any man shall drive me away."

"Really, Mr. Onslow, I—" the gentleman began. He was quite bewildered by the sudden apparition of Jasper Onslow and his wild words, so that he hardly knew what he was doing. "Miss Carlyon, I had no idea, I assure you, that—"

"That Mr. Onslow had taken leave of his senses," she said coldly. "Nor I, I assure you. Are you mad, sir, that you make such a monstrous assertion?"

"No; but I was mad when I let you fool me into the belief that you loved me. I was mad when I let your lips touch mine—your eyes look with mock love into my face. I was mad, was I not, when you let me clasp you in my arms in your boudoir yonder, and bid me never despair?"

"You are mad now," she said, in the same cold tone, "to imagine that I, Doris Carlyon, would ever marry you. You assert somewhat too much, Mr. Onslow; and it is hardly gentlemanly or grateful of you to seek to trifle with my honor by such accusations. Don't touch him, Mr. Marston, I beg. I am not afraid of him."

"By Jove! I should like to pitch him out of the window," said the young man, bluntly.

He was beginning to feel Doris Carlyon's fatal fascinations for himself, and to lose his senses to her beauty.

"Don't try it," Jasper Onslow said, calmly. "I am something wasted by the fever of hope and despair through which I have lived for months past—something shocked and chilled by this rude awakening—but I have strength enough yet to spare you the trouble of attempting to avenge any fancied insult to Miss Carlyon. Madame, to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be able to thank you as I ought for thus opening my eyes. Your cousin, Mr. Dormer, did not slander you, as I believed. Allow me this evening to pack up. To-morrow I will leave Kingcolm and its mistress, whom I believed to be the purest lady—heaven help me!—that ever walked the earth until this bitter moment."

He looked at her; but there was no quailing in her face, no mercy in the cold glittering eyes.

"Stay, Mr. Onslow," she said; "I can pardon your madness, and regret that any chance word of mine should have led you so wofully astray, but I cannot pardon a breach of contract. You undertook to paint my portrait—I have upset my drawing-room that it may have the best place on its walls—I have used my influence with some friends at the Academy to win it a good situation there—is it fair of you, for a mad whim, to leave it unfinished, and make both yourself and me the laughing stock of all who know us?"

He looked full at her, his eyes full of fire, such as a wounded stag might show to its tormentor, and his handsome face turned white to the very lips.

"I had forgotten that it was a matter of bargain," he said, bitterly. "I will finish my work, Miss Carlyon—finish it, do you hear?"

"I am glad to hear it," she said.

She did not mark the light that had flashed into his eyes as he spoke, nor the concentrated fury of his voice.

"What further sittings you want I shall be happy to give you; but I must really beg that you will make haste. Here we are in March, and it looked to me terribly unfinished last time I saw it."

"I will have it done in time," he replied, gravely. "I shall not need to trouble you any more. If you will let me have the dress and scarf, that is all that I shall require. No caprice of mine need detain you at Kingcolm another hour. If you wish to shut up the pavilion, I can finish just as well in my London studio."

"Oh dear, no! I would not have you disturbed for the world."

"You are very good."

He left the room and the house, and took up his quarters at the village inn, going every day to the pavilion to work at his picture.

Doris Carlyon molested him no more, and in about a fortnight word was brought to her that Mr. Onslow wished to see her, for that his picture was finished.

"Thank goodness," she said to Mrs. Bellew when she heard it. "We shall be rid of him now. Come, Muriel, put away your work and come with us. I want your opinion of it before it goes away.

(To be continued in our next.)

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

CHAPTER XXI.

"LET IT BE THE FIRST OF MARCH."

Mrs. Martyn Verne was introduced in the first chapter of this story. Two years have passed since we first saw her, but they have not altered her greatly. The suspicion of a wrinkle has appeared on her smooth forehead, and a gray thread or two mingles with her brown hair. She is just as portly and imposing, and her voice is just as smooth as ever.

Since Aubrey De Lancy went away on that fair October morning two years ago, Mrs. Martyn Verne has not been idle. She feels that she has well performed all her duties to society, her step-daughter and herself.

She has given scores of croquet-parties on that lovely bit of lawn that has lived so long in Aubrey's dreams; she has held informal twilight "teas," taking care that none but the eligible young men and the ugly girls—they were not many—of the neighborhood came.

She has destroyed every letter that Tim, her errand-boy, received from Mildred to post, directed to Paris, and also every letter bearing the Paris post-mark that entered the house. She has done this silently, without any one in the house being aware of it.

Her chief duty to society, herself and her step daughter, is that the said step-daughter shall marry a rich man. But so far, her step-daughter has refused to do anything of the kind.

Poor Mildred Verne! These two years of weary waiting have been long, sad years for her. In appearance, she has not changed. She is as beautiful and graceful as ever; but there is a quietness—a gravity about her—a wistful look in her large, earnest eyes that tell you she is not the same. Through these years she has been true to her love for Aubrey De Lancy—constant, with a firmer, undoubting trust than he or any man could give. How could she doubt his faith? Had he not promised to be true to her?

There had been days when it seemed as if her heart must break—days when she had expected a letter, and none had come.

"The curse o' Cromwell be on the men, anyhow," faithful Nora would mutter as she noticed the expectant, eager look die away from her young mistress's face. "Thanks be to goodness, I don't care fwat for none o' 'em, and none o' 'em cares for me."

But, though Nora was probably not as thankful as she pretended to be, her rude, hearty sympathy in Mildred's trouble was very grateful to her young mistress.

Nora herself did not believe in Aubrey's constancy, but she never breathed a doubt to Mildred, and when her step-mother had attempted to perform "her duty" with more than usual vigor, the girl had gone to the tender-hearted servant for consolation, and after that Nora would revenge herself and Mildred on Mrs. Martyn Verne by pulling an extraordinary number of gray hairs out of that lady's head.

Since Ralph De Lancy's coming home, Mildred had not been persecuted by her step-mother. Ralph De Lancy had called on Mrs. Martyn Verne, and explained the conditions of the will. Aubrey was expected home. Mrs. Martyn Verne felt that, had she known how things would turn out, she might have saved herself all that trouble about the letters. "But," sighed this modern Pharisee, "I did it all for the best."

Aubrey was coming home! Was he changed? Mildred asked Ralph De Lancy a hundred questions. But he was not good at description. He could only say that Aubrey was a fine young fellow.

As if Mildred did not know that!

They heard of the burning of the Thetis about a month after Ralph's return. They also heard that Aubrey was on board, but whether he was alive or dead they did not hear. The suspense was agony to Mildred.

December was nearly past, and Mrs. Martyn Verne had again begun to drag Mildred into "society," when suddenly it was announced that Aubrey De Lancy had returned.

The case stood thus: Laura Burleigh had for the last two months been Mildred Verne's companion, or rather the companion of Mrs. Martyn Verne, for, although that lady had engaged her to "cheer up Mildred," she soon found that Laura Burleigh, or Mdlle. Val-Vert, was very congenial to herself. Mildred instinctively felt that this woman was as false as she was beautiful, and she was only too glad to be rid of her companionship.

Ralph De Lancy never called at Mrs. Verne's since Mdlle. Val-Vert had entered her house. He had a wholesome fear of making a fool of himself. After a time, Laura became aware that her chance of becoming his wife had passed away. She sent to Ross all the particulars about Mildred and Aubrey and Ralph De Lancy that she could gather from Mrs. Verne and Nora, who was "taken in by her soft-spoken ways." About the middle of December, Ross Burleigh arrived at Ralph De Lancy's palatial mansion.

Ross Burleigh walked up the long flight of steps with marble balustrades that led to the house, and laughed aloud as he ran his eye over the Gothic windows, balconies, and the massive pillars that supported the façade.

"Mine—all mine," he thought, laughing again. "My mother was a wonderful woman."

Ralph De Lancy was lying, weak and ill, on a sofa in his library, when a card, bearing the name, "Aubrey De Lancy," was brought to him. It was inclosed in an envelope.

Ralph De Lancy had not been well since he had heard of the destruction of the Thetis. Two things preyed on his mind. The loss of his son and the loss of the Sea of Fire.

You remember, perhaps, that Aubrey had found the Ruby in the iron box, accidentally left by his father at Paris. It was the true Ruby, which Ralph De Lancy had detached from the chain constantly worn by Aubrey around his neck. Finding that no entreaties could induce Aubrey to place the stone in his keeping, he determined to obtain possession of it by stratagem. The lower classes in Paris are fond of jewelry, and Ralph easily found a dealer with a varied stock of false stones. He selected one, made a drawing of the Sea of Fire—he remembered every facet on it—and had the false stone cut to resemble the Ruby. He was not so successful in his attempt to imitate the crest. He had managed to give Aubrey a narcotic, and then had taken the steel chain, and by means of a fine file, detached the Ruby. The false stone was then fixed to the chain by the adroit fingers of Miguel, Ralph's Indian servant, and placed on Aubrey's neck, while he slept.

Ralph De Lancy had not profited by this underhand proceeding. The Sea of Fire was now with Aubrey on the Isle of the Sun, and Ross Burleigh had crushed the false stone to pieces on the day that Madame Burleigh had died.

The loss of the Sea of Fire was as great a grief to him as the loss of Aubrey.

A deadly hue overspread his face, as he sunk back on the sofa after reading the card sent in by Ross Burleigh. He tore it into a thousand atoms with his nerveless fingers.

"Shall I show the gentleman in?" asked the amazed servant.

"Show him in—yes. My sin has found me out!" he groaned. "My sin has found me out!"

Ross Burleigh entered with a triumphant, sneering smile on his lip. When the servant had gone, he advanced to the trembling, ghastly-faced man on the sofa, and handed him an open parchment.

"I am Aubrey Ross De Lancy," he said, looking steadily into Ralph's wavering eyes.

The elder man glanced at the parchment.

"I, Ralph De Lancy, of Belair, State of Maryland, U. S. A., being of sound mind, do hereby certify that Aubrey Ross De Lancy, the reputed son of Robert and Annetta Burleigh—"

"Yes," gasped Ralph. "You are—you are Aubrey—"

He did not finish the sentence. He fell back, fainting.

Ross chuckled. "He caved in more easily than I expected."

Ross rang the bell vigorously.

"The poor old boy was too glad to see me, that's all," he announced to the astonished servants. "Don't you know me? Why, I am Aubrey De Lancy!"

And this was how Aubrey De Lancy had come home!

"By Jove!" he cogitated. "It's lucky I didn't marry Inez de Vastro, after all. I can go in with a clear conscience for this girl in the will, and not be content with half the old general's estate."

* * * * *

Twilight was falling. It was too early to have lights, and too late to do anything else. Night was coming as softly and gradually as the light snow that was coming down with it.

The lawn, flower-beds and shrubbery were one uniform tint of gray. The twilight was helping the snow to cover their barrenness from sight.

It had grown too dark to read, and Mildred closed her book. She rose and stood at the long window, gazing out on the desolate scene. She was not thinking of it, though it accorded with her mood. A favorite stanza occurred to her, and she murmured—

"Pray, though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your tears—
May never repay your pleading—
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears.
An answer, not that you long for,
But diviner will come one day.
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive, and wait and—"

She stopped suddenly. There were two men coming up the walk. One appeared to be leaning heavily on the other's arm. Was there a third, or was it merely a shadow? It seemed to Mildred as if another man had followed them at a short distance, and disappeared in a clump of evergreen, half way between the house and the gate. Perhaps it was only a deceitful evening shadow.

Mildred's heart beat tumultuously. Who were these two? Could it be Aubrey—the tall one on whose arm the other hung.

She heard the bell ring, and then they entered the hall. One of the voices was certainly Ralph De Lancy's. She did not know the other.

She heard her stepmother talking as they went into the parlor. Her heart sunk. No; it was not Aubrey.

There followed steps in the hall. The door opened, and Mrs. Verne entered.

"What, no lights! Mildred, my dear, where are you?"

"Oh, I will find her myself," spoke an unknown voice. "Milly, my darling! I have found her!"

She was clasped in a man's arms, and at that moment Nora entered with lights, and stood in open-mouthed amazement in the doorway.

"Sir!" cried Mildred. "Release me! What does this mean?"

She spoke scornfully and indignantly.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Verne. "Is it possible you don't know him? He is Aubrey De Lancy. I knew him the moment I saw him, though he is changed."

"Changed! he's another man, entirely," put in Nora.

He turned, and looked at her in a way that made her quail.

"Faith!" muttered Nora, as she went out. "He's got the evil eye in furrin parts, I'm afther thinkin'."

"I have not forgotten you," he said to Mildred, reproachfully. "See! I have kept this these long years." He carefully unfolded her sketch of the pansies and forget-me-nots.

He had her token. Her face flushed, and love, chilled for a time, came back to her heart. She looked timidly into his face, and then withdrew her eyes, feeling an inexpressible loathing. What experience had he gone through, to change him so? Time alone could never have done it.

"Come, Milly," he said. "Let us go into the next room. My father is waiting to greet you."

Mildred did not take his proffered arm. She followed him slowly, as if she were in a dream. He had never called her Milly in the old days.

Ralph De Lancy seemed to have grown ten years older since she had seen him last. He shook hands with her.

"My son Aubrey has come home," he said to her in a strange, passionless way. An evanescent gleam of pity shone in his eyes. "This is my son. My son Aubrey has come home," he repeated, and then, leaning his chin on his cane, he stared in silence at Mildred.

The two stayed until late in the evening. Mildred escaped from the vicinity of the younger man as soon as possible, and sat down near the piano, while he talked to her stepmother.

Ralph asked her for an old song, and she sang it for him. "Mildred," he said, interrupting her before she had finished the last verse, "Mildred, you will be my daughter if you marry him? Won't you?"

"Yes," she answered, with an effort.

"That is well, at least—that is well." His face brightened, but his chin went down on the cane again.

It had not struck Mildred before to-night that Ralph De Lancy was such a very old man. Mildred looked from the father to the son. "Old as he is," she thought, "I would rather marry Ralph De Lancy than Aubrey. Is this what I have waited for so long? Oh, how could I have ever loved him!"

Mdlle. Val-Vert did not come down. She had a headache.

After awhile Nora came in with a tray-load of teacups and cake. When she had gone out, Mildred could not restrain herself from running out after her. She was in the act of crossing the passage when Mildred stopped her.

"Oh, Nora," she said, resting her head on the shoulder of the faithful servant. "Oh, Nora, what shall I do? It will kill me to marry him. I know it will."

"Ooh shone, don't cry, mavourneen!" returned Nora, nervously smoothing Mildred's soft hair. "Faith, he's no more like his own self—than—than I am. I wouldn't have him, darlin'."

"But I must. Oh, Nora, I promised long ago!"

"I wouldn't have him, mavourneen, if he was made o' goold. Divil a bit!" snapped Nora, forgetting propriety in her excitement. "Go in now, soushla, they'll be wantin' you."

When Mildred re-entered, the two men were on their feet.

"Milly," said his hateful voice, "don't you think we may be married on the first of February? Your mother makes no objection."

Only one month between her and her Fate! Her lips trembled, but she spoke no word.

"You will give me an answer, Milly, to-night? Remember how long I have waited."

"I do not love you as I used, Mr. De Lancy," she stammered. "Release me—pray release me from the promise I gave. Or, at least," she continued desperately, "give me more time."

"The first of March, let us say, then," he said, softly. "I confess, Mildred, that I did not anticipate a reception such as you have given me. I suffered, I worked for you—"

"I do not think you had a right to anticipate a warmer reception," she cried, flushing with indignation. "You have not written to me for these two years. I have received no letter from you."

Unconsciously she raised her voice, and Mrs. Verne, at the other end of the room, caught the words.

"The mails, Mildred dear," she began, crossing the room in an excited manner, "the mails are not to be depended on in South America. Perhaps Mr. Aubrey did not receive yours."

"No," he said, recovering from the slight perplexity he had felt when Mildred alluded to the letters. "No. I have not received a single letter from you, and you accuse me of neglect."

"It must have been the fault of the mails," said Mildred, slowly.

Mrs. Verne discreetly crossed to Ralph De Lancy.

"Now, Milly, give me an answer," he said, trying to make his voice tender and imploring. What if she should refuse him? The idea of losing half the general's estate made him tremble. "Shall it be the first of March—no later?"

A flower-stand stood near them. Mildred nervously took from it a monthly rose, and tore it to pieces before she answered. Even that slight act seemed to relieve her. He was not the Aubrey she had loved. And yet could the alteration be in her and not in him? The thought startled her. She extended a cold, passive hand to him.

"Let it be the first of March, then," she said, and as she spoke the words, her eye caught the pink rose petals at her feet. It seemed as if the rose of her life had been torn and scattered; and the sentence ended in what sounded like a suppressed sob.

He bent low, but saw something in her face that forced him to kiss her cold, white hand, instead of her lips, as he had intended.

"Good-night," she said, coldly.

"Au revoir. Come, father."

The old and the young man went down the garden path. When they had passed the gate, a third figure appeared from a clump of shrubbery and followed them.

Ralph's restless eyes caught sight of it as they turned into the road.

"We are followed," whispered Ralph, halting.

"Come on," said the false Aubrey, loudly. "I have something here," and he touched his breast-pocket, "ready for any who may deserve it."

The man behind him heard the words, and slunk into the darkness.

That night an old man, bent nearly double, whose dark face appeared to be a mass of fine wrinkles, took lodgings at a low tavern on the outskirts of Moulton. He seemed strangely ill at ease in civilized clothing, and he spoke no English, but was marvellously skilful in pantomime.

This old man was Antonio the Avenger. He was on Ross Burleigh's track. For many nights and days he waited and watched.

CHAPTER XXII.

"SI, SENOR."

When Felix Brierwood had burned the will, renounced his name, and left Moulton with the feeling that all the brightness had gone out of his life, and that henceforth there was nothing for him but hard work, to drive away thought and regret, he intended to see Inez only once again.

Although he had given up his name and fortune, there was no excuse for leaving Fadette Desmoulins, who was his relative, in the care of strangers. He would send Fadette to some good school, and when he should grow old he would have her to comfort his declining years, he thought, pathetically, and then he drew a picture of himself as a gray-haired old man in the act of giving away a young and blooming bride, Fadette, to a youthful and ardent bridegroom.

As Fadette, though very small, was only ten years younger than himself, this mental picture of his was not very likely to become a reality. But he sighed over it, all the same.

He called at Mrs. Leslie's for Fadette, he told himself, but he asked for "the ladies." He discovered that Fadette had a will of her own. She refused to go to school now that she was almost fifteen.

"Ma foi, my new cousin!" she exclaimed, "I have no desire for education, but I have the talent for being femme de chambre to Miss Inez, and femme de chambre I will be!"

After this assertion, he of course found it necessary to call every evening, for he was a hard-working member of the firm now, and daylight visits were tabooed; his visits were ostensibly to convince Fadette of the folly of her resolution. The manner of Inez toward him was unchanged, and soon the restraint of his own wore away. He endured a pang whenever he looked at her and thought she was another's, and yet it was easier to endure the pain of that thought than to stay away from her.

Inez did not know of his sacrifice. He only told her that he would not assume the name of De Lancy.

It was on the night of the 28th of February. They—Inez, Rose, Mrs. Leslie, Felix, and Neil Ruxton, were going to the opera. Mrs. Leslie had not yet come from her room, and Ruxton, to Rose's loudly expressed displeasure, had not yet arrived. The others were seated in Rose's sanctum.

Rose, with pretty, pouting red lips, was idly turning the leaves of a magazine. Inez reclined in her favorite fauteuil. There was a faint rose flush in her cheeks, and a soft light in her eyes to-night. Of whom was she thinking? of her father who was expected every day, or of Aubrey De Lancy? Felix wondered; but he would have been beside himself with rapture, had he known of whom she was thinking.

Inez was beautiful at any time; but to-night, with a starry, crimson flower burning in her dark hair, her white, flossy cloak thrown back, and folds of amber silk and black lace sweeping around her, and setting off her brunette beauty, she was transcendently lovely. No wonder Felix sighed.

"You haven't heard the news, I suppose, Mr. Brierwood," said Rose, dropping her magazine. "How late he is! It's always the way with men. They grumble and grumble at us for never being ready in time! But you haven't heard the news, I suppose?"

"No, I think not."

"Well, Dr. Bulstrode is visiting some friends in Moulton, and I received a letter from him this morning. I'll tell Neil about it, by the way, to pay him for being late. Dr. Bulstrode writes that Aubrey De Lancy, Inez's gallant champion, is to be married to-morrow, the first of March, to a Miss Verne."

"A nice, good girl, I hope," said Inez. "When my father comes, I shall make him send them a splendid wedding present."

Felix looked up in astonishment. She spoke the words quite calmly, as if Aubrey De Lancy were nothing more to her than any man who had done her a service.

"Father is coming soon," she continued. "I wrote to him long ago, but the letter was delayed, for his answer came only one month ago; and surely it does not take one whole month to come from Paris, though when I came," she shivered, "it seemed a year."

The door-bell tinkled.

"It is Neil at last! I know it is my duty to give him a preliminary scolding." And with a flutter of ribbons and ruffles, Rose ran from the room.

Felix crossed to Inez.

"Inez," he said, "I love you."

Inez's cheeks flushed deeply red, and she raised her eyes to his with a happy light in them.

"Will you be my wife, Inez?"

The eyelids drooped, and she answered softly and half-shyly—

"Si, señor."

"The conquering hero comes!" cried Rose, throwing open the door to admit a stranger.

It was Señor de Vastro.

Father and daughter were instantly clasped in each other's arms.

"I am too happy to-night," sobbed Inez.

"Heaven is very kind."

Felix Brierwood thought so too.

When the first greetings were over, and Señor de Vastro had refreshed his inner man, he related how the Gloria—he had come in that good ship—had been delayed for various causes; how, after starting, the fresh water had got low, and Captain Durivage had sent boats off to an unknown island for a supply; how the crew had noticed a white man on the island, who made signals to them, and how they, with Captain Durivage at their head, had, finally, after a hard struggle with the natives, rescued Aubrey De Lancy from his captors.

"Aubrey De Lancy!" cried Rose. "Then he must have reached home before you."

"No," answered Señor de Vastro. "I have just left him. He goes at once in great haste to some place, I know not the name of which, to see his lady-love, I do suspect."

"How could Dr. Bulstrode know that Aubrey De Lancy was to be married to-morrow, if he—De Lancy—arrived to-night?" demanded Rose.

A few conjectures were hazarded on this question, but the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Neil Ruxton, looking very rosy and stiff, in full evening costume.

They all concluded not to go to the opera, though Lent was very near, and but a few nights of the gay season remained. They preferred to listen to De Vastro's stories; but Rose and Ruxton quarrelled in whispers the whole evening, and heard very little.

Inez had also much to tell her father, and although she kept back something, her father guessed that from her eyes.

Before Felix went, De Vastro held a short, private conference with him.

On that night, Felix Brierwood came to the conclusion that his living and loving were not all over yet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

The morning of the first of March had come—a bright, clear morning, with a solitary cloud drifting across the sky at intervals, and a gusty wind that made the branches of the leafless trees rattle and wave.

Mrs. Martyn Verne, rustling in satin and velvet, was in a state of intense excitement. Her duty was about to be fully performed—or, rather, her devotion to her duty was about to be rewarded. Had not her stepdaughter caught the richest man in the county?

"You have been a true mother to her," said the mamma of one of the bridesmaids, gazing wistfully at the diamonds Ralph had presented to the bride.

"My conscience tells me that I have," returned Mrs. Martyn Verne, virtuous and complacent.

Mademoiselle Burleigh had refused to be a bridesmaid. She had a headache to-day, she said, she could not be present at the ceremony, the crowd, the excitement, etc., would be too much for her.

In fact, people had noticed the extraordinary resemblance existing between her and Aubrey De Lancy, and she knew that in his presence, the resemblance could not fail to strike those who had not remarked it before.

Therefore, she preferred to remain at home.

She was seated in the parlor, talking to Dr. Bulstrode with a degree of vivacity that contradicted her plea of a headache. Bulstrode had called very often of late at Mrs. Martyn Verne's, but he and Laura alone knew the cause of his visits. Mrs. Verne had been too busy, and Mildred too preoccupied to notice anything. Dr. Bul-

strode was handsome, and not poor, and, having lost Ralph De Lancy, Laura resolved to content herself with this susceptible physician. Laura was fearful that her lover would recognize Aubrey De Lancy as the Baron Val-Vert; but as the two only met casually, he had not as yet done so.

The hour named for the ceremony was twelve o'clock. It was now half-past eleven, and the carriages were waiting.

In the upper rooms bridesmaids were flattering about, and putting the last touches to one another's hair distractedly.

"Och, sonshie," whispered Nora, wiping her eyes with her apron, having finally arranged the orange-blossoms in her young mistress's hair, "you're as white as your dress. Turn back, darlin', turn back! you'll niver have a happy hour again if you marry him the day—even if he was your first love—mind I tell you."

"I must keep the promise I gave him, Nora," she said, with a calmness that seemed like the calmness of despair.

"If she'd only flash up," groaned Nora in spirit, "if she'd only get angry or cry, I'd have some hope."

Mildred Verne did neither; she quietly took her bouquet from Nora, and, pale as marble, allowed herself to be handed into the carriage.

Everybody was ready at last, and the cortege drove off.

A few moments after the last carriage had disappeared around the corner, and while faithful Nora still stood at the door, wiping the tears away with her apron, a man—a young man, with frank, blue eyes and a bronzed face, walked up the path.

Laura Burleigh saw his tall form approaching and shrank back with a frightened face.

"Good-morning, Nora," he said, blithely; and Nora knew that cheerful voice and smile well. "I've come back, you see. Why, what's the matter?"

Nora looked as if she saw a ghost.

"Is it yourself, sure, Mr. Aubrey, or is there two o' you?" she muttered, looking intently into his face. "Och, sure I'd know you among a thousand! It's yourself surely!"

"It certainly is, Nora," returned Aubrey, both amused and perplexed by her incoherent welcome. "Is Miss Mildred at home?"

His voice trembled slightly on the name.

"She's gone!—gone to be married!" cried Nora, clutching his arm tightly with one hand, and with the other pointing in the direction the carriages had taken. "To be married to Aubrey De Lancy—to yerself, sure! D'ye hear me?"

She might well ask that, for he stood rooted to the ground, his features working convulsively.

"D'ye hear me, man!" she continued, shrilly, trying in her excitement to push him forward. "They've gone to St. Stephen's! Afther them, or she'll be the wife of the man that calls himself by your name. He was only a make-believe. Och, shone, where were our senses at all at all?"

At last he caught the sense of her words. Away he flew down the garden path and along the street.

People stopped to look after him and wonder whether he was an escaped lunatic or a thief with the police in pursuit.

He ran through a small cross-street, and reached the imposing Gothic back of St. Stephen's.

In the wall was a small door used only by the clergymen and sexton.

An old man, with a bent form and a wrinkled face, was stealthily entering by it. Aubrey hastily pushed him aside.

He stood within the church. He saw Ross Burleigh advancing up the aisle leading the drooping form of Mildred. He did not see the waiting clergymen, the crowd of faces in the pews, the gay procession.

He saw only two—one with a triumphant, evil face; the other, seemingly as cold and as calm as if life had deserted her.

The procession slowly approached as the swelling tones of the organ sounded the notes of the wedding march.

A buzz of surprise ran through the church, for Aubrey had advanced to meet the procession. Ross Burleigh saw him, and a dangerous gleam shot into his dark eyes. In another moment the two stood face to face.

"Mildred!" said Aubrey, in a voice fraught with infinite tenderness. "Mildred!"

She raised her head with a startled glance.

"Aubrey!" she cried, "Aubrey!" and she drew away from Burleigh, and stood by Aubrey's side. "Yes, you are Aubrey, and he—"

"Is an impostor!" Aubrey's voice rang clear and sharp, through the sacred edifice.

"I am Aubrey De Lancy, and you are the impostor!" said Ross Burleigh, coolly, with a triumphant smile. "Ralph De Lancy, my father, I appeal to you. Which is your son?"

There was no answer. Ralph De Lancy had fallen lifeless into the arms of a gentleman near him.

They carried him out through the small door. Ross Burleigh followed. Aubrey came after him more slowly, for Mildred clung to his arm, sobbing.

Ross Burleigh had just stepped from under the small arch of the door when something flashing and bright swept before his eyes. He saw a fiery-eyed old man, bent and wrinkled, as he half turned; but the old man had one arm raised high in the air, and in his hand was a machete. The arm descended, before Burleigh could utter a cry, the knife was buried in his left side.

Groaning, he reeled and fell. They picked him up almost instantly, but he was dead. The surgeon called to examine the wound, found that the knife had entered his heart.

The wrinkled, dark old man disappeared, no one knew whither. Again had Antonio the Avenger proved his right to his name.

FINALE.

THE LAST OF THE SEA OF FIRE.

Felix Brierwood and Inez de Vastro became man and wife early in June. Rose Dunivage regretted that she could not officiate as bridesmaid, because she had become Mrs. Buxton a month previously.

Felix never told Inez of his sacrifice for her sake, until one day, rummaging among his papers—as some wives will do—she found that leaf from Madame Burleigh's memorandum-book.

He tore it into pieces, and told her the story.

The look she gave him was worth a thousand estates, he thought.

"You did right," she said. "We will have more than enough—and Aubrey De Lancy deserves all you gave him; but, oh, Felix, how could I love anybody but you?"

Mr. and Mrs. Brierwood, Señor de Vastro, and Fadette, went to Brazil, in which country Brierwood's enterprise and industry are making a fortune for him—a fortune which bids fair soon to rival the colossal proportions of Señor de Vastro's.

Mildred and Aubrey were not married until late in the summer, on account of Ralph De Lancy's death—of heart disease, the physicians said—on the first of March. Mildred cannot speak, without trembling, of the terrible fate she escaped that day.

Laura Burleigh did not care to meet the true Aubrey De Lancy. She silently stole away from Monlton, accompanied by Rolstrode. It is said that they have married, and are living at Baden-Baden.

Aubrey wished to have the Sea of Fire set in Mildred's wedding-ring. She refused, and he did not persist.

The two stood on the lawn, where they had parted once. The crimson glow of sunset fell around them, and a fresh breeze had arisen to cool the earth, heated by the fervor of an August sun.

It was the day after their marriage.

He looked tenderly down upon her, and his glance strayed to the plain gold ring on her finger.

"The Ruby should be there," he said.

"No, Aubrey; I like it better as it is. Besides, it has caused enough evil. It is time it did some good."

"You want me to sell it, and give the proceeds to your favorite orphan asylum, I suppose, little saint."

"Yes, Aubrey."

"It is so valuable that I doubt whether anybody but a king could buy it, unless it were cut in pieces, and sold as four separate stones."

"This is my first request," she said.

He could not resist the pleading look in the sweet upturned face. A few months afterward the Ruby was cut and sold for immense sums as separate stones.

And so the Sea of Fire passed away forever.

THE END.

OUR PUBLIC SQUARES.

That bright and sparkling paper, Fitzgerald's "All-Day City Item," contains an article relative to the management of our public squares, which some one ought to have written ten years ago. We say *ditto* to the Colonel, with all our heart. Hear him:—

"The Public Squares of this city belong to the people of the city, were bought with the money of the people, and are for the use of the people. They should not be garden plots of plantains, nor yet fields of stunted grass, adapted to yield a small crop of tasteless hay, the sale of which contributes to the emolument of some lazy, yet grasping gate-tender—"superintendent" so-called. Neither should they be darksome places for the concealment and encouragement of vice. Nor should they be the enclosures of sham fountains—fountains well enough in their way, excepting that they give out about as much water during the day as could an industrious boy with a penny squirt. Nor should the outside pavements be impassable during the winter by reason of the snow—the only pavement fronts permitted to be left unswept. No more should the dust of Spring, Summer and Autumn be allowed to accumulate there year after year, ready to be blown into all surrounding houses and stores with every breeze, and guiltless of the slightest contact with the broom.

"On behalf of two hundred thousand children, and echoing the sentiments of half a million of people, we do not ask, (for the time of petition is passed,) but we demand that our dreary walled pens called Squares shall be made Public Gardens, that flowers shall be planted whose own beauty shall protect them from depredation; that children shall not be prevented from playing on the grassy turf; that the grass shall be treated like the lawn of a gentleman's country seat, and kept velvety and short, instead of being allowed to grow up coarse, rank and forbidding. We demand Light—positive prohibition in itself to nocturnal impropriety. We insist upon real fountains—fountains gushing with an abundance of water—not some miserable cross between the work of an iron-founder and a plumber, with not enough water to keep them respectably damp. And the hideous, useless, detestable iron railings, giving access to dogs, and denying it to human beings—down with them.

"They have barred the ways of hundreds of thousands of toiling men and women during this Winter, and during every Winter, who would otherwise have shortened their ways to and from their daily toil. They have deprived, and this moment do deprive, thousands of little children from using the Squares as a playground. Why should not the youngsters play in the Squares in Winter as well as in Summer? Skating, sledding, snowballing, sliding, athletic amusements of all kinds could be practiced by the young, who need fresh air and invigorating exercise even more in Winter than in Summer. Nothing now restrains them but these wretched iron railings. And if the incarnate wisdom and æsthetic tastes of those who control this matter, cannot bear to part with these prison bars, we demand, we humbly beseech, that an ordinance shall be passed at once, decreeing that the Squares shall remain permanently open, with unlocked gates, in whatever weather, in whatever season, from sunrise to ten or eleven o'clock at night, and that no such miserable pretences as the necessities of a hay crop, or the softening of gravel walks, shall weigh for one moment against the universal demand of the people, whose forbearance cannot be expected to last much longer."

A Good Story.

An amusing story of an English nobleman, recently deceased, is told by the "Man About Town," in the English Sporting Gazette. We give it in his own words: "The duke," he says, "was once in church, no matter where, when a collection was announced for some charitable object. The plate or bag, or whatever it might be, began to go round, and the duke carefully put his hand into his pocket and took out a florin, which he laid on the pew before him ready to transfer to the plate. Beside him sat a little snob, who, noticing this action, imitated it by ostentatiously laying a sovereign alongside the ducal florin. This was too much for his grace, who dipped his hand into his pocket again and pulled out another florin, which he laid by the side of the first. The little snob followed suit by laying another sovereign beside the first. His grace quietly added a third florin, which was capped by a third sovereign on the part of the little snob. Out came a fourth florin to swell the duke's donation, then the little snob triumphantly laid three sovereigns at once upon the board. The duke, not to be beaten, produced three florins. Just at this moment the plate arrived. The little snob took up his handful of sovereigns, and ostentatiously rattled them into the plate, then turned defiantly toward his rival, as who should say, 'I think that takes the shine out of you.' Fancy his chagrin when the duke, with a grim smile, put one florin into the plate, and quietly swept the remaining six back into his pocket. His grace used to chuckle when he told that story, and I think, on the whole, he had the best of it."

YELLOW JESSAMINE.

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

In tangled wreaths, in clustered gleaming stars,
In floating, curling sprays,
The golden flower comes shining through the woods
These February days:
Forth go all hearts, all hands, from out the town,
To bring her gayly in,
This wild, sweet Princess of far Florida—
The yellow jessamine.

The live-oaks smile to see her lovely face
Peep forth from the thickets; shy,
She hides behind the leaves her golden buds
Till, bolder grown, on high
She curls a tendril, throws a spray, then springs
Herself aloft in glee,
And, bursting into thousand blossoms, swings
In wreaths from tree to tree.

The dwarf-palmetto on his knees adores
This Princess of the air;
The lone pine-barren stands star and gigle,
"Ah! come, lest I despair;"
The myrtle-thickets and the sheltered thorns
Quiver and thrill within,
As through their leaves they feel the dainty touch
Of yellow jessamine.

The garden-roses wonder as they see
The wreaths of golden bloom,
Brought in from the far woods with eager haste
To deck the poorest room,
The rich man's house, alike; the loaded hands
Give scraps to all they meet,
Till, gay with flowers, the people come and go,
And all the air is sweet.

The Southern land, well weary of its green
Which may not fail nor fade,
Beatific itself to greet the lovely flower
With leaves of fresher shade;
The pine has tassels, and the orange-trees
Their fragrant work begin—
The spring has come—has come to Florida,
With yellow jessamine.

—*Appleton's Journal.*

The Matrimonial Infelicities of the Giants of Literature.

The matrimonial infelicities of Charles Dickens, which are now the theme of considerable discussion and speculation on both sides of the Atlantic, naturally suggest the inquiry, Why is it that literary men are so frequently unlucky in their ventures after wedded bliss? The question might with quite as much propriety be put in this way, Why is it that women who marry literary men are so frequently disappointed in their hopes of happiness? There ought not, surely, to be any incurable incongruity between the pursuit of letters and the liberal exercise of the domestic feelings. Because a man can write a fine poem, a fine play or a fine novel; because he can produce a noble history, a splendid system of philosophy, or an elaborate treatise on physical science, is no reason for his being a bad, or even an indifferent husband. The mere fact that his intellectual faculties are highly cultivated and fittingly employed, ought—one would think—to stimulate his affections and keep them always in vigorous and healthy exercise around legitimate objects. Yet in spite of the excellence of this theory, it too often fails, and fails miserably in practice. Socrates is almost as famous on account of the terrible dance which Xantippe led him, as for the treasures of wisdom which he has transmitted to an admiring posterity. Shakspeare's experience with Anne Hathaway could not have been particularly pleasing, else he would not have left her when he did and as he did, and bequeathed to her only his "second-best bed." It is hard, and at the same time rather amusing to realize that the author of Hamlet, Macbeth, and Midsummer Night's Dream, had such a commonplace thing about his house as a "second-best bed;" and painfully suggestive that he should have a wife, who, in his opinion, was not worthy of first-class sleeping accommodations. Addison and Lady Gwynne thought he was making a magnificent match, when, after a long and tedious courtship he married the dowager countess of Warwick. Dear old "Spectator!" How his high-blooded spouse worried that gentle spirit, and made him only too glad to fly from the stately saloons of Holland House and take refuge in a humble club-room with his book, his glass, and a boon companion. Many a time, we doubt not, he wished himself back in his bachelor garret, free from care and curtain lectures, and undisturbed by the unsocial skeleton which confronted him at the other end of his dining-table. Addison's fortune was made by this couplet in the Campaign—

"And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

But whatever Marlborough might do on the plains of historic Blenheim, the poor poet was obliged to acknowledge that he himself had, in the shape of a wife, a whirlwind and a storm which it was cheaper to dodge than to direct.

Burns was the sweetest of song writers and the champion love-maker of his day; but he was far from satisfied with Jean Armour, and "bonnie Jean" must have been a saint in petticoats if she was satisfied with him. The truth is that "the inspired peasant," whose memory and whose verses will live as long as the English language endures, was a sad scapegrace in domestic matters, and utterly unable to keep his roving fancy within the bounds of law or gospel. Mrs. Burns has, of course, a passport to immortality in the same boat with her liege lord, but it would have been much better for her had she given her heart and hand to some honest Highland lad whose name never penetrated beyond the limits of the parish where he lived and died. Byron was worse than Burns. He commenced his matrimonial career with no love at all, and did not improve during the short year which the experiment lasted. Undoubtedly there was fault on both sides, but the bulk of the fault was with him—or rather, perhaps we should say, with the rose father and half mad mother who brought him into the world. He was no more suited to matrimony than he would have been to the study of divinity. Had he married Mary Chaworth instead of Miss Millbanke, the result would have been the same in kind, if not in degree. He got on very amicably with the Countess Guiccioli simply because he was not married to her. Had he taken the vow to "love, honor, obey, and so forth," the sunny-haired Italian girl would have had reason to sympathize with the heroine of Mrs. Stowe's monstrous fiction.

Swift may or may not have been married to Stella, but he treated her so badly that we imagine he must have had a legal right to do so. Vanessa fared no better, and both Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh had cause to curse the day when they first looked upon the face of the great dean. Read the Tale of a Tub, and the adventures among the Brobdignags and Yahoos, and then fancy the author of these awful satires with wife and children by his side! There is horrible mockery in the very idea. And yet, as Thackeray says—"Swift could love and could pray." But what love and what prayer were his! Who but his Maker can unravel the mystery of them?

We might lengthen the list of matrimonial bankruptcies among literary men, but the instances given will abundantly suffice.

Now why should the brain kings of the race so often form such unprofitable alliances? Possibly this has something to do with it: High genius—and we do not mean the pinchbeck stuff which generally passes under that title—is a species of inspiration, which lifts the possessor, while the fit is on him, above the earth and earthly things. He is, so to speak, a habitant of celestial regions, a companion of celestial beings, a sort of temporary demigod, who is in the world, yet not of it. The going up is easy, but the coming down is difficult to accomplish gracefully; and, when the descent is finally made, the contrast of surroundings is apt to disturb the mental equanimity of the aerial voyager, unless he has a large infusion of sturdy common-sense—and common-sense is seldom joined to high genius. So Socrates returns home from the grove where he has been discoursing upon the anatomy of the soul, and finds Xantippe darning stockings, or supplying a lost button on the Socratian shirt. He salutes her in an absent-minded manner; treats her, it may be, in a condescending style of infinite superiority; rouses a tempest which he cannot quell, and at last is obliged to fall back in good order, with a three-legged stool in the immediate vicinity of his venerable head. So Shakspeare, with his bosom full of ecstatic visions; with Juliets, Beatrices, Imogens, Desdemonas and Rosalinds clinging to his fingers, goes to his plain house and sees plain Madame Shakspeare nursing the baby or scolding the cook. His romance and her reality are too much for him, and he flits away to the tavern, and then to London, and becomes an alien and an outcast from the domestic Eden. So Addison carries Cato, Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Wimble and the rest of that excellent company to the boudoir where the grim dowager awaits him; and behold, these shadowy friends of his all fade into thin air, leaving him to battle alone with the majestic lady who, as Sam Johnson says, "took him to be her slave." Addison retreats to his club, and laments that he ever put his neck into the silken noose. So Burns exchanges the ramble among the heather, where bright-eyed nymphs and lightsome fairies had been his associates for the poor cottage where his Jean is engaged in attending to a large and interesting family; and straightway he, too, is upset by the tumble from aloft, and retires to commune with "John Barleycorn," or apotheosize "Mary in Heaven." So Byron, with his arm round the waist of an imaginary Medora, Donna Julia, Haidee or Dudu, lounges through the hall, where a constable is in waiting, and meets the Lady Anna Isabella Milbanke Byron in the library. She rebukes him for being out too late, or for running in debt without the slightest ability to pay, and of course the blood of Childe Harold is up in an instant, and a scene occurs at which we may laugh or weep as we please—for there is in the background of it exile, misery, shame, and a lonely death in a foreign land. So Dickens, with a cloud of Little Nells, Little Dorrits, Florence Dombeys and Agnoses around and within him, sits vis-a-vis to the fat, fair, possibly dull mother of his juvenile tribe, and finds she is "unsympathetic and uncongenial," and that he must shake off a yoke which should have been adjusted to his shoulders after twenty-five years' wearing.

Shall we blame all these men for having made a clumsy choice in the great lottery where the blanks are many and the prizes few? Yea, verily—but pity them, too. They are fashioned of finer spiritual clay than the rest of us, and the fragile material, though precious beyond all measure, is liable to flaws, and easily—alas, too easily marred. After all, should not the giants dwell alone? Those very qualities which lift them above their fellows make them more fastidious and more fickle than the majority of mankind. Their ideals of womanhood are so grand, so perfect, so immaculate, that none but angels can realize them—and angels are not as plentiful upon this terrestrial ball as "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." At least it is safe to assert that the genius who marries is an amiable lunatic, who knows not what he wants, and rarely gets what he expects; and the woman who marries a genius has, in nine cases out of ten, a flattering prospect of a superfluity of unhappiness.—*St. Louis Republican.*

The Marseillaise.

The famous Marseillaise Hymn was first heard in July, 1792, when the wild Marseillais entered Paris by the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, a black-browed mass, dusty and tattered after their long march, but full of savage determination. Their hymn obtained a popularity throughout Paris and throughout France, which it still retains. But it owes this to its fine music as well as words, which are martial without being sanguinary. The Marseillaise Hymn became the song of the Revolution. Lamartine has described it in a magnificent passage, as "a recovered echo of Thermopylæ,"—it was heroism sung. "The notes of this air," says he, "rustled like a flag dipped in gore, still reeking on the battle plain. It made one tremble—but it was the shudder of intrepidity which passed over the heart, and gave an impulse—redoubled strength—veiled death. It was the 'fire-water' of the Revolution, which instilled into the senses and soul of the people the intoxication of battle. There are times when all people find thus gushing into their national mind accents which no man hath written down, and which all the world feels. The foot advances—gesture animates—the voice intoxicates the ear—the ear shakes the heart. The whole heart is inspired like an instrument of enthusiasm. Art becomes divine; dancing, heroic; music, martial; poetry, popular."

The author of this widely-popular song was Rouget de Lisle, a young officer of artillery, at Strasbourg. He was a republican, a musician, a poet, and a soldier; and he threw his whole soul into his song: he composed the words and the music together—he never could tell which was first in his mind; but the song was speedily taken up, sung out of doors in Strasbourg, flew like lightning across the country; the Marseillais adopted it as their hymn, to be sung at the opening and the close of the sittings of their clubs: and they carried it with them to Paris, whither it was spread over the world.

Progress.

The Tower of Babel was a pigmy to what a company of enterprising Philadelphia bridge-builders propose to construct as a monument to grace the approaching Centennial exhibition in this city. It is to be of wrought iron, one thousand feet in height, and beside it such structures as the dome of St. Peter's, or the pyramids of Egypt, would be dwarfed into insignificance. The tower is to be circular in form, one hundred and fifty feet in diameter at the base, diminishing to thirty feet at the top. It is proposed to have spiral staircases winding around the centre tube for those preferring to walk up; but elevators (or "lifts") will be provided, which are calculated to ascend to the top in three minutes. This is one of the greatest engineering projects of the age, and we learn that it is in the hands of constructors capable of completing whatever they undertake.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ An impertinent fellow wants to know if you ever sat down to tea where skimmed milk was on the tables without being asked, "Do you take cream?"

☞ Madame Taglioni still teaches dancing in London. Is Terpsichore the goddess of perpetual youth?

☞ Joaquin Miller found Geneva too full of his countrymen, and to relieve himself of their presence he drove to the nearest boat, and asked the clerk to take him where there were no Americans. The clerk looked at him for a moment, then hopelessly up and down the lake, and away across toward Mont Blanc, and at last shook his head. Suddenly a new idea seemed to strike him, and he lifted his eyes toward heaven.

☞ "Why did the general take you on his staff?" was asked of a young Hussar not long ago by an enthusiast. "Oh, I'll tell you—because I cut—" "Through the ranks of the enemy, you hero!" interrupted the enthusiast (she was a lady). "Oh, dear, no, nothing of the sort; it was because I cut up a turkey so well."

☞ Tom asked an old "ten-per-cent." what he wanted to accumulate so much money for. Says he, "You can't take it with you when you die, and if you could it would melt."

☞ A rural gentleman, visiting a friend, found at the back of the house, after dark, an immense snake lying on the grass. He procured an axe, and when he had chopped the reptile in a dozen pieces he discovered it to be a garden hose, which should have been hung in the tool-house.

☞ The New York Herald describes Anthony Trollope as a novelist whose religion is that the universe was constructed for the purpose of providing him opportunities of relating, through innumerable chapters, how impossible it is for a girl to choose between two men, neither of which she is certain she don't love.

☞ Lord Robert Churchill, son of the Duke of Marlborough, will take Miss Clara, daughter of Mr. Leonard Jerome, of New York, for better or worse, at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London, in May.

☞ P. T. Barnum, the great American showman, says that he has engaged two celebrated aeronauts to make a voyage across the Atlantic from New York to Europe, during the coming summer. The balloon is now building, and will be placed on exhibition in London before bringing it to this country.

☞ A Wisconsin man couldn't find the word he wanted, in the dictionary, because there was no index.

☞ A family at Green Bay, Mich., were forced to mortgage their six dogs, the other day, to get a barrel of flour.

☞ Upon the "outer wall" of a neighboring female college, the other morning, was discovered, conspicuously displayed, the sign, "Domestic Sewing Machines." Some of those specimens of total depravity, known as college students, did it.

☞ Town Gent—"Now do you find keeping poultry answers?" Country Gent (lately retired)—"Oh, 'es, s'posed to answer. I see there's the original cost of the fowls—'t course the food goes down to me, y' know. Well, then, I purchase the eggs from the children, and they eat them."

☞ A New York manager received lately a letter from a young San Francisco actor, enclosing his carte de visite, and asking for an engagement. After recounting his many excellencies for the position applied for, his letter concluded with: "If you do not want me, return my picture by next post, as the ladies here are crying themselves sick for 'em!"

☞ Thad. Stevens used to say that he had been the counsel for the defence in more than fifty murder cases, in all of which but one he had been successful, and all of his clients deserved to be hung except the one who was hung, who was certainly insane.

☞ At Virginia City, Nevada, lately, James Booth was fatally injured by having both legs cut off by a railroad train. A young man who saw the accident fainted, and his hair, which was black, instantly turned white with the shock. It is feared that he will not recover from the blow to his nerves.

☞ "Dried tongue," was the answer which a minister, just going out to "exchange," gave some one who asked him what he had in his carpet-bag—which contained seven sermons.

☞ A Lancaster (Pa.) man, who is a veteran member of a lodge, says that while leaves may have their time to fall, the curtain lecture season lasts from January 1 to December 31, with no postponement on account of weather.

☞ Lord Lytton says, "Six well-educated, clever girls out of ten keep a journal; not one well-educated man in ten thousand does."

☞ It is said that very tall silk hats are to be the fashion for dressy men during the ensuing summer.

☞ Queen Victoria is now in the 37th year of her reign and in the 55th year of her age. She has nine children and twenty-one grandchildren.

☞ It is rather cool in a San Francisco paper to advise a young man "to go West."

☞ You do not need to black your boots in Pittsburgh. You hang them out of the window at night, and they are black enough in the morning.

☞ UNHAPPY MEN.—One who had the reputation of being a great philosopher, an experienced man of the world, a profound thinker, and an acute observer, with a deep insight into human nature, has left on record the expression of his firm conviction that no man, however rich, however gifted, however fortunate in his domestic relations, however successful in his public undertakings, can be pronounced happy—whose trousers bag at the knees.

☞ Ben Zine asked O'Shea, "How is it that the most reliable account of the Deluge makes no mention of Irishmen having been taken into the Ark?"

"Divil the one was there," said O'Shea.

"How, then, was the race perpetuated?" queried Ben.

"Faith," said O'Shea, "in those days the Irish were wealthy, and had a boat of their own."

☞ They were neighbors; they died at the same time and were buried on the same day. Mrs. Madox came to the house of mourning to aid in the last sad offices. She stood by the coffin and murmured: "Very much changed." She seated herself, but soon arose and took a second look, repeating the remark. A third time she looked, and a third time exclaimed, "How changed." "Madame," said a bystander, "this is John West's body; Nancy Green's funeral is next door." Mrs. Madox left.

☞ CONUNDRUM.—"Little Tommy didn't disobey mamma and go in swimming, did he?"—"No, mamma; Jimmy Brown and the rest of the boys went in, but I remembered what you said, and didn't disobey you."—"And Tommy never tells stories, does he?"—"No, mamma; I wouldn't tell a story for all the worlds."—"Then how does Tommy happen to have on Jimmy Brown's shirt?" That conundrum was too much for Tommy; he had to give it up.

☞ A Pittsburgh reporter has been "interviewing" John B. Gough on the subject of the women's temperance crusade. He said he was "on the fence" in the matter. He would be unwilling to take any active part in the affair, and would not like to see his wife or his nieces going about among the saloons praying and singing hymns. He thought the movement would help the woman suffrage cause very much, and he had always had a sort of dislike to the woman suffrage business. The idea of a band of ladies going through the streets singing hymns and praying, was repugnant to him. It was the duty of policemen to clear away a crowd of men obstructing the pavement, and he thought the women came under the same restrictions.

☞ A certain college professor asked a new student to give him his name, and was astounded when the young man, in response, gravely remarked, "You are a brick." "What do you mean, sir?" he inquired, and again the obnoxious answer was given. At this the professor grew angry, declaring that he would not be insulted, when the innocent cause of his wrath disclaimed any intention of insulting him, and explained by saying, "My name is U. B. A. Brick—Uriah, Reynold, Anderson—" "Ah, indeed?" was the professor's ejaculation, as he settled back, and added, "You will commence your lesson, Mr.—a—a—Brick!"

☞ The man who answered an advertisement to the following effect, says his curiosity is satisfied: "If you would learn how to make home happy, send a postage stamp and twenty-five cents to P. O. BOX, No. —, Cincinnati." He did send the necessary cash, and soon received the answer: "If you are as big a fool as we think you must be for giving us your money, you can make home happy by leaving it and going West yourself."

☞ "Mary," said an old Cumberland farmer to his daughter, when she once asked him to buy her a new dress, "why dost thou always tease me about such things when I am quietly smoking my pipe?" "Because ye are always best tempered then, feyther," was the reply. "I believe, lass, thou'rt reet," said the farmer, "for when I was a lad, I remember my poor feyther was the same; after he had smoked a pipe or twee, he had gi'en his head away if it had been loose!"

Poverty of the Blood.—If the blood be thin and watery the whole system is impoverished. The flesh is flabby, the muscles lack hardness, the nerves are relaxed, the internal organs but imperfectly perform their functions, the brain is inert, and, in short, the entire body is only half alive. The stomach is mainly responsible for this wretched condition of the human machine. Stimulate and tone that organ with HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS, and a marked change for the better will soon be apparent. The result of improving the digestion with this potent and genial tonic will be the conversion of the food into rich, pure blood, and as the blood is the raw material from which flesh, muscle, brain, bone, and every membrane, tissue and ligament of the body are manufactured, all those components of the material frame will be gradually regenerated and invigorated. This is sound doctrine, and it is sustained by the logic of facts.

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THE
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 1874.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

AMERICAN WOMEN.

At their entrance into womanhood our countrywomen are the most beautiful in the world; not only in face and figure, but in grace of manner and thorough-bred deportment. They take the palm for beauty in the courtliest assemblies of the old world. But the distinction is very short-lived. Pretty girls are as common in America as spring flowers, and as perishable. They do not mature into handsome matrons. Why?

There is any amount of talk comparing English with American women in matters relating to health and beauty, too much of it mere loose talk, with very insufficient grounds of knowledge. The subject is so important and interesting that any new light thrown upon it is most acceptable. This we find in an able article in Scribner's Magazine for April. The writer has evidently studied and observed thoroughly in America, and then used to good purpose her two years' residence in England. They have the advantage over us of a permanent aristocracy, looked up to and imitated by all ranks in proportion to their income. An advantage it proves to be in matters concerning physical welfare, because the quiet possession of abundant means for centuries has resulted in sensible habits of living—those most conducive to health and happiness.

Some of these habits are available as examples to us; in one important particular they are impracticable. All classes, high and low, live easy, take time to breathe and go pleasuring. How impossible that is here!—partly from the newness of the country, partly from its changeable institutions. For instance, the farmers of England, a class comparable in means with our farmers, live at their ease, getting the good of the country. Laborers do the work on the farm, and servants the work in the house. The mistress and her daughters are free to walk or ride every day along the lovely lanes branching out over the beautiful and fragrant garden land. There is a cook at home getting dinner, a housemaid cleaning up, a nurse attending to the children. When do our country girls walk in the woods? From one end of the year to the other when do their mothers go with them? Such a thing is not thought of. The house affairs are all engrossing. Even if the farmer can well afford it, hiring house work is the last use to make of money. And even if leisure for health and enjoyment are considered worth paying for, the difficulty remains that help is unattainable. A capable substitute for the mother in cooking, housework, nursing, is sure to marry just as soon as she proves her capability. So the case stands in America; and the only satisfaction of knowing a better way than drudgery, is that of having an ideal to strive after.

The health of women, meanwhile, suffers and must suffer from overwork. The poorer classes in England are inferior in physique, especially the children, to the corresponding class here, from bad housing and insufficient food; but in one respect they have the benefit of a good example; they take their "outings,"—excursions, pleasurings of various kinds, as a matter of course, and rarely overwork.

The healthful ways of living adhered to by the highest in the land, are accepted universally as the proper thing, followed by all, in proportion to their means, and consequently compliance with them is easy as swimming with the current. Children are kept upon simple and carefully chosen diet, they live out of doors, (even in town there are parks and gardens,) and their habits are almost perfectly regular; not dependent, as so often with us, upon the uncertain possibilities exacted from an overtired mother, attempting to fill every position in her own household. The best remedy for this in America would be Kindergarten schools, wisely regulated, for physical education chiefly.

It is truly remarked that we cannot, in a changing society like ours, in which people are up to-day and down to-morrow, have died sanitary habits adapted to the different grades of wealth, and that we must substitute an active intelligence in place of it. The press is all the time busily disseminating correct ideas upon exercise, fresh air, and wholesome diet; and very marked effects are visible in the last twenty years. Boys and girls are observed growing up with a finely developed physique, though they had less strength to begin with than their parents. And the hard work inseparable from life in a new country has its good as well as evil. It cultivates the faculty of endurance, in which, accordingly, American women are found unrivaled. The strongest of them in England, those who are pressing on the educational and franchise movements, would not think themselves capable of the exhausting work that some of our distinguished women go through. The nervous energy and will-power that there is so much call for in our country have entered into the character, and are invaluable weapons against pain and weakness. Then the appearance of superior health, the English plump and ruddy look, traceable partly to beef and beer, is not all real. Girls and women fall into invalidism, looking pretty well all the time. Prostrate on a couch for years, they do not lose flesh or color.

After all, the greatest impediment to the health of American women is their false ideal of beauty. "Unfortunately, we have an ill-trained eye in this matter of physique. Accustomed to see the women of our leading families, the best-bred women, slight and thin, we naturally associate this physique with refinement and ladyhood, and it comes to be the ideal which is admired, and to which girls are stimulated to aspire. The large feet, thick waists and strong hands of English women might be thought very suitable for comfortable and efficient wives and mothers in America, but they would not help women to marry." S. P.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

CONCERNING AN INCOMPATIBILITY.

Is there anybody in America, who knows how to read, that has not been touched to the heart by the writings of Charles Dickens, particularly where he depicts scenes of matrimonial love and fidelity? I find a question something like that asked in a late newspaper, and I think I'd like to ask it over again, since reading certain chapters of Forster's Life of Dickens. I mean those chapters referring to the vexed, and not pleasant subject of Dickens's separation from his wife. I wish I had never heard that disagreeable story about Dickens. Folks, that is critics, say that the private life, good or bad of an author, ought not to have any influence in our judgment of his works. Maybe it oughtn't, but how is anybody going to help it, I want to know? If a celebrated man is bad or mean or weak in his private character, how can all the world help knowing it, and judging him accordingly? When anything is emphatically and particularly good or bad, we can't help thinking to ourselves that it is good or bad, whether we have any right to think or not. It is in the nature of the constitution of the human mind.

So, whether we have any right to judge of Dickens's domestic squabbles or not, we do judge 'em, and can't keep from it. I contend that we have a right, however. A man whose living depends on public approbation, who writes books for the public to read, sets himself up, by that very act, to amuse or instruct the public, and I contend that that public has a right to judge whether its self-appointed teacher is a good or bad man.

Dickens's matrimonial difficulties do not adorn a tale very much, but they put a very sharp point indeed upon a moral which is old as the hills. It took Dickens twenty-five years to discover that he had made a mistake in the marrying business. It appears that "Poor Catharine" did well enough for a wife when the future famous novelist was young and poor. "Poor Catharine" was plenty good enough then. But Dickens wrote some successful books. He got money, and became famous. He made distinguished acquaintances, who praised and petted him, and lionized him. He went jaunting over the world on pleasure trips, went to Italy, to Switzerland, then spent three or four summers in France, leading a "romping, gilded life," having an orientally splendid dinner given him by Emile de Girardin, being flattered and worshipped like some old Greek hero or demi-god, and living on the nectar and ambrosia of praise, as well as the nectar and ambrosia of everything else. I don't say he didn't deserve it all, mind you, because I admire Dickens as much as any human being can, but tell me, where was "Poor Catharine" all this while? Did she go with him and have a good time too, in her rightful place at her gifted husband's side? Not much. "Poor Catharine" stayed at home with her ten little Dickenses. That was the good time she had. And if anybody wants to know what sort of fun it is to stay at home and take care of ten young ones, let him try it awhile, that's all.

By and by Mr. Dickens became still more rich and famous. Mrs. D., it seems, didn't pet and praise and worship Mr. D. as Mr. D. got to thinking so superior a mortal as himself should have been perpetually praised and petted and worshipped. Then Mr. Dickens began to write to other people, complaining of "Poor Catharine's" incompatibility, and to talk about "temperament," and that sort of gammon. I always begin to despise a married man when he begins to tell me about the sort of woman he ought to have married. Whose fault is it, pray, that a married man didn't choose the sort of woman he ought to have chosen? It's not a good sign when a married fellow gets to talking about temperaments. I have a supreme contempt for these married sympathy-seekers of either sex.

It is a bad thing for the silent partner when a woman's husband or a man's wife gets it into his or her head that he or she is a genius. I've seen ever so many families made miserable and even broken up in that way.

Dickens got his head turned by the immense applause and flattery of the outside world, and began to think "Poor Catharine" ought to treat him as a demi-god too. "Poor Catharine" didn't seem to see it, however, and then Dickens begins to write to one and another of his friends and flatterers as follows:—

"Why is it that a sense comes always crushing on me, (sic) as of one happiness I have missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made?" Sense comes crushing on me! Rather good, that is. Again, "Poor Catharine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it." "Nothing on earth could make her understand me, or suit us to each other." Dear! dear! Poor man! Above all people on earth I pity a man's wife—when he gets to thinking she can't appreciate him. I daresay poor Mrs. Dickens wasn't all that a wife might have been. Mighty few of us women are, for the matter of that. And Mrs. Dickens may have been stupid and slovenly, for all I know—I don't know whether she was or not, I'm sure—she mayn't have been at all the "affinity" for the gifted Dickens, but it looks a little queer that it took him twenty-five years to find it out. Besides, whatever she was, as long as her great unappreciated genius of a husband lived with her and called her his wife, she didn't deserve to be complained of behind her back in letters to all his confidential friends, and to have it said of her to this and that fellow—

"I feel that the skeleton in my domestic closet is a pretty big one."

Now, if I'd catch my husband writing a pack of stuff like that about me, behind my back—Jupiter! wouldn't there be some hair pulling when I found it out! I say, no matter what a husband or wife is, as long as you live with the one whom you have taken for better or for worse, it is infinitely mean and low down to go around complaining of your other half to your friends. That was what Dickens did, and it casts a shadow of something very ignoble even over the transcendent light of the genius which has made us all laugh and cry by turns, a hundred times. If you are all tight and fast married to anybody, make the best of it, and keep your mouth shut about your troubles. That is the noble way.

Shall we speak evil of the dead? Nay; but we may draw a lesson from their lives. We have a right to do that. Mere gossip about people's domestic difficulties is extremely contemptible, and I shouldn't have mentioned this wretched theme at all, only for the "preach" which one single sentence in Dickens's letters contained for me. Here is the key-note of it all—

"There is plenty of fault on my side, I daresay, in the way of a thousand uncertainties, caprices, and difficulties of disposition, but only one thing will alter all that, and that is the end which alters everything."

That was exactly where the trouble lay. Dickens never tried to "alter all that." He never tried in the least to make himself any the less capricious, or whimsical, or, irritable. He thought "poor Catharine" ought to put up with and humor every one of his moods, no matter how foolish or unreasonable they were, in short, ought to fall down and worship him even when he was a perfect cross-patch, as I've no doubt he was, sometimes. (Everybody who writes for a living is a perfect cross-patch, at times. I'd hate to live with such an one, for a steady thing.) Now, two angels couldn't live together peaceably on such terms. Moreover, any two married people in the universe could speedily find cause for separation in just the same way that Dickens did. Incompatibility! My gracious! Good friends—we could all squabble everlastingly and make an everlasting hot little purgatory out of every one of our homes if we didn't try to keep from it. We are all a set of snarly, selfish, whiney animals by nature, and it is the task of our glorious humanity to subdue this snarly, selfish brute. If Dickens had "a thousand uncertainties, caprices, and difficulties" in his disposition, then Dickens ought to have tried desperately to "alter all that." Matrimony is an infinitely proper, happy, and natural state, but matrimony requires more patience, mutual forbearance, and self-control than it takes to be a school-mistress, or run a saw-mill. What are we here in this world for, if it isn't to conquer and cast out the little uglinesses and meannesses in our souls, and so approach nearer and nearer the noble and the perfect life?

Once, in a freak of fun, my little nephew Frank, harnessed his two dogs together, by tying a rope around their necks. Then he got a stick and tried to drive them. I happened to witness the interesting experiment out of the window, and nearly rolled off my chair with laughter, at seeing the creatures. Whack, Master Frank would come down upon their backs with his stick, and then the dogs started. First they came bump together, then they tried to run away. Next they stretched as far apart as the rope would let them, and howled,—glory! how they did howl. Then they would try to run again, and one would go up hill and the other would start down hill, and whack would come Frank's stick over their backs again, and presently bump up together again, came the dogs, knocking each other head over heels, fighting and scratching each other desperately, every time they touched. Then away they went again, pell-mell, with the rascal Frank galloping at their heels, laughing, roaring, and shouting like a young demon. It was evidently a very extreme case of incompatibility. I beg your pardon very humbly indeed, but I couldn't for my life help likening those two scratching, desperate dogs, tied together unwillingly, by a rope around their necks, to the holy estate of matrimony. For the state of mind of those two poor beasts is like the state of matrimony, unless married people try to whip out the snarling dog which lies curled up in the souls of us all. And if instead of petting their little ill-tempers, and expecting the other partner to yield to all their selfish, ugly, mean little whims, married folks would only try to be forgiving, gentle-tempered and reasonable, in all cases treating the other partner exactly as they would like the other partner to treat them, we'd shortly hear the last of this execrable, miserable, scandalous, squabbling, dog-and-cat "incompatibility." Yes, indeed!

ZIG.

L'AMOUR ET LA MORT.

When the end comes, and we must say good-bye,
And I am going to the quiet land;
And sitting in some loved place hand in hand,
For the last time together, you and I,
We watch the winds blow and the sunlight lie
About the spaces of our garden home,
Soft by the washing of the western foam,
Where we have lived and loved in days put by;

We must not weep, my darling, or upbraid
The quiet Death who comes to part us twain;
But know that parting would not be such pain
Had not our love a perfect flower been made.
And we shall find it in God's garden laid
On that sweet day wherein we meet again.

Over-Civilization

It is a curious fact that the great empires of the world have all perished in one way—by what might be called over-civilization. They have grown in power and in strength, for generation after generation—then, being done with the need for conquest or for toil, they have grown luxurious and effeminate, and some hardier, simpler race has arisen, and conquered, and succeeded them; to be, in its turn, spoiled by prosperity, and repeat the old story. In view of these facts about the past, the Rev. Charles Kingsley puts a profound historical conundrum. When we English-speaking people become enervated with luxury, and need to be taken down, who will do it; since now there is nowhere left a people hardier or braver, to conquer us. Heaven seems to have given us the opportunity to go on, and not to die; if we are strong and self-controlled enough to improve it. But history is no false prophet; and just as surely as we love ease and pleasure better than progress and honor, the enemy will come from somewhere—were it from the sky over our head or the earth under our feet—who will destroy us. The victories to which this age, if it is faithful, is destined, are bloodless ones. We have broad fields of science to conquer; forces to discover and put to use which will infinitely multiply the strength and the resources of the world; great truths to establish; broad charities to maintain. But all this is not work which the indolent and the luxurious can accomplish. If we do not do it, others must; and if we waste our opportunities, surely the conquering foe waits for us somewhere, and we, too, shall be among the nations that have been.

Frankness in Love.

One of the most essential things in all love affairs is entire and perfect frankness. Both parties should be frank—true to themselves, and truthful to each other. How many uneasy, troubled and anxious minds—how many breaking and how many broken hearts there are to-day in which content and happiness might have reigned supreme but for a want of frankness!

Repentance comes, inevitably, for all these things, but it often comes too late, and only when the evil produced is incurable.

In love, as in everything else, truth is the strongest of all things, and frankness is but another name for truth.

Then always be frank. Avoid misunderstandings; give no reason or occasion for them. They are more easily shunned than cured; they leave scars upon the heart. You are less likely to be deceived yourself when you never try to deceive others. Frankness is like the light of the clear day in which everything may be plainly perceived.

FREE PLATFORM.

TEMPERANCE AND PROHIBITION.

MR. EDITOR:—This week, with your permission, I will continue my remarks in opposition to some of the points advanced by NO FANATIC under the head of Moral Suasion.

He insists that the only question he has raised in relation to Prohibition is, whether, in the first place, such laws do promote Temperance; and, secondly, even if it be proved that they do, whether they do not gain their end at the price of Individual Freedom, and of moral virtues as important as Temperance itself. The question of personal liberty I have already considered.

Now as to the truth in the matter of the efficiency or inefficiency of Prohibitory laws in promoting the cause of Temperance, there are numberless claims of success and failure on both sides. We hear it asserted by one party that such statutes are inoperative; by the other, that the results are in the main good and satisfactory. In many witnesses there is confusion, but now and then we hear the clear calm voice of one speaking without trammel or bias. Listen to what Governor Dingley, of Maine, says. In the first place he announces that he cares nothing whatever for politics and politicians, and is not going to color his speech to suit the views of the latter. Declaring his intention to enforce in letter and in spirit the Prohibitory statutes of the Sunrise State, he pointedly says "*that the Anti-Liquor laws of the Commonwealth over which he presides, are in the main excellent,* and that they have hitherto been violated through the connivance of gubernatorial politicians."

We take Gov. Dingley to be a model governor, and wish that every State had such. Then we should hear less about the inefficiency of the Prohibitory laws, and the liquor-dealers would stand more in awe of them.

NO FANATIC is of the opinion that Prohibition tends to the formation of a large class of persons, hypocritical in their professions, publicly, it may be, denouncing the use of strong drink, and privately indulging in it. We say flatly that we do not believe that any such result follows the adoption of Prohibitory laws. The great mass of Temperance advocates—Prohibitionists, if you choose—are sincere and consistent in their profession of such principles and in their daily conduct as relates to them. There *are* a few hypocrites in the great body of Temperance men we admit, the same as there are hypocritical professors of religion—some of them of the highest social standing—but for the man who in the noble cause of Temperance preaches one thing and practices the opposite, we have the utmost scorn and contempt. We disown such men—we abhor and denounce them, for their conduct merits merciless condemnation. We have heard of famous Temperance writers, famous Temperance orators using their pens and their tongues to the emphatic benefit of their pockets, and yet taking their wine on the sly, and laughing to think that people can be so easily deluded. Such statements are easily made—they sometimes are originated by the enemies of the cause—but are not so easily substantiated, and for the reason that cases of the kind are rare.

NO FANATIC asks, in commenting upon Dr. Holland's article, "Why are the men of this country healthier than the women? The great majority of men drink—the great majority of women do not." Now does NO FANATIC really think that it is *because* men drink that they are healthier than women? He knows very well that other causes operate to produce the existing condition of the matter. If the women of the country—or the "large majority" of them—were suddenly to take to drinking, does he suppose that their health would be radically improved? In reference to the women of other countries—the German and English women—he says they are hardier and stronger than American women, though the former drink large quantities of beer or wine. But it is *in spite* of these habits, not because of them, that the women of foreign countries are physically so superior to those of our own. The habits of living of the great mass of American women—rich or poor—are bad, with the single exception that they are not greatly addicted to the use of strong drink, or even beer or wine. Enumeration of the causes that produce the general debility of the women of our country is not necessary here. Suffice it to say that it is *not* because they do not drink beer or wine that their health is not better.

NO FANATIC grows almost facetious when he speaks of the prevalence of drinking habits among the people of Europe, and refers to their general good health. He seems to desire to argue that wine and beer drinking are conducive to health and longevity. But the truth is these habits are destructive; but Nature has so wonderfully endowed her human children with preservative powers that the demons of Destruction, powerful and numerous as they are, have never yet been wholly able to beat down and destroy the physical forces of life. It is not beer and wine, not the punch-bowl nor the coffee-pot that save the race from degeneration and extinction; but those grand invisible forces of Nature which so seldom get the credit for it.

The evils of Intemperance are *not* exaggerated by Temperance orators and writers—it is impossible to exaggerate them. Rather the whole sad story of ruin and unhappiness wrought by that giant evil has not yet been told.

In conclusion we will say that we were sorry to hear of the adverse result of the recent election in the Twenty-second Ward of this city, (Germantown) on the local option question. Local option is not yet a failure, and we think Germantown would have lost nothing by giving it a more extended trial. Yours, etc.

TEMPERANCE.

ANTI-PROHIBITION.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—I wish to offer a little evidence relative to the failure of Prohibitory laws to do what they undertake to do. And this evidence is of the strongest kind, inasmuch as it comes from men who are themselves in favor of Total Abstinence. First hear Dio Lewis. At a recent meeting in this city this veteran champion of Temperance delivered an address, and we quote as follows from the report in the Daily Chronicle:

Some one in the audience asked if the success in Ohio was not in a great measure owing to the fact that the law is more stringent there than in any other State in the Union.

Dr. Lewis denied that such was the case, and stated that in Boston there are 3,000 open dram-shops, with a prohibitory law of twenty years.

The triumphant termination of the liquor traffic will undoubtedly be caused by the enactment of a prohibitory law everywhere. *The per centage of dram-shops in Boston to-day, however, is larger than in Louisville, Kentucky.* The speaker was not opposed to a prohibitory law. He trembled lest women should do something that would loosen their influence, get off the track, and talk in a loud voice. He did not, however, apprehend such a contingency.

Again. At a recent Temperance meeting in Portland, Maine, Ex-President Hill, of Harvard College, said:—"That in his experience of half a century, in various places, *he had never seen so many young men intoxicated and staggering through the streets as he had seen in Portland during the last six months.*"

Ex-President Hill may come to Philadelphia, where we have no Prohibitory Law, and walk our most crowded streets for weeks, and not see one young man under the influence of liquor. The writer of this is in the habit of walking daily through some of the principal streets of Philadelphia—seeing in the course of a week probably tens of thousands of people—and yet he does not think that on the average he sees more than one drunken man a week. Now what does this prove? It proves that, considering the immense quantity of liquor drank—probably eight men out of ten drinking more or less weekly—that the proportion of moderate drinkers is very large indeed; say at least ninety-nine in the hundred.

It is very probable that in those country neighborhoods in Maine where a large majority of the people are in favor of sustaining the Prohibitory law, the law is pretty well enforced. But the consequence of this is, that the minority, whose freedom to determine for themselves what they will drink is encroached upon by their austere neighbors, gradually sell out their property and seek a residence in some freer latitude. Thus Maine, we believe, is the only State whose population is gradually falling off. Maine, in fact, may be said to have begun the process of dying out. For the moment population begins to lessen, that moment land begins to fall in price, houses decrease in value, and the general industries of a State begin to languish. The oppression of minorities is thus revenged by the unalterable laws of human nature. Just as France persecuted from her soil tens of thousands of her Protestant subjects, including many of her best artisans, because they would believe and practice what the great majority thought to be wicked, so Maine is probably to a smaller and less manifest extent doing the same thing. She is becoming the residence of a Sect, and not of a People.

It is too late, in this country, to strike down the liberties of the people, on the plea that the people, as individuals, cannot "govern themselves." If they cannot as individuals, they cannot as a multitude. And if *they* cannot, who can? Some other people?

How absurd to found a government on the doctrine that the People not only are able to "govern themselves," but have a sacred right to do so, and then go to work to pass laws saying what a man shall be allowed to drink. Why, if a man is not man enough to be allowed to determine for himself what he will eat and what he will drink, he certainly is not man enough to have the control of the destinies of a great nation confided to him. Let our Temperance men be a little consistent—and either act according to the American idea that the people are able to "govern themselves," both individually and collectively, or else give it up altogether, and apply to the reigning families of Europe to send some King Stork or King Log to rule over us.

The advantage of Liberty is not so much constant right-doing, as the discipline and improvement of the moral and intellectual faculties. And it is, we say it reverently, the method of God. The whole plan and structure of the world proves that its Creator has no respect for any virtue which cannot stand erect in the midst of temptation. He has put man into a scene where temptation assails him on the right hand and on the left. Why? Because only in that way could man be made virtuous, which means strong. Without these temptations he might be innocent—but the aim was to make him virtuous and a conqueror. Let our Reformers not imagine that they can better the plans of the Almighty. Let them care less about removing temptation—which they will find very difficult—and more about strengthening the moral fibre of the race. Let them cease all this whining about the poor drinker, and the wicked liquor-seller—it is merely sapping the little strength that is still left in the intemperate man. He alone can help himself—he and the good angels. He is not to be saved by removing temptation, but by fleeing from and withstanding it. Do not encourage him to think that he can fasten his weakness and degradation to the skirts of the liquor-seller. It will make him a meaner man than he already is. Tell him his only hope is in himself, and in a proper mode of living.

For, after all, Intemperance is, to a great degree, an effect of other evils. Bad water, badly-cooked food, gluttony, miasmas, too much work, too little rational pleasure, depression from disappointment and discouragement, unhappy marriages, destitute and cheerless homes—all these, and other evils, tend to drive men to the bar-room and the inordinate cup. But this is too large a branch of the subject to take up at the close of an article, and I reserve it for a future presentation.

NO FANATIC.

Health and Talent.

It is no exaggeration to say that health is a large ingredient in what the world calls talent. A man without it may be a giant in intellect, but his deeds will be the deeds of a dwarf. On the contrary, let him have a quick circulation, a good digestion, the bulk, thews, and sinews of a man, and the alacrity, the unthinking confidence inspired by these, and, though having but a thimbleful of brains, he will either blunder upon success or set failure at defiance. It is true, especially in this country, that the number of centaurs in every community—of men in whom heroic intellects are allied with bodily constitutions as tough as those of horses—is small; that, in general, a man has reason to think himself well off in the lottery of life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind, or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach. But of the two, a weak mind in a herculean frame is better than a giant mind in a crazy constitution. A pound of energy with an ounce of talent will achieve greater results than a pound of talent with an ounce of energy. The first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal. In any of the learned professions a vigorous constitution is equal to at least fifty per cent. more brain. Wit, judgment, imagination, eloquence, all the qualities of the mind, attain thereby a force and splendor to which they could never approach without it. But intellect in a weak body is "like gold in a great swimmer's pocket." A mechanic may have tools of the sharpest edge and highest polish; but what are these without a vigorous arm and hand? Of what use is it that your mind has become a vast granary of knowledge, if you have not strength to turn the key?—*Prof. Mathews.*

WIT AND HUMOR.

SLAM THE DOOR GENTLY.

Slam the door gently!
Most people can hear,
By listening intently
When thunder rolls near.

And some folks, if earthquakes
Should travel their way,
Would be stirred by the great shakes
To ask, "What's to pay?"

And gratuitous thunder
From closing doors crashed,
Inspires one to wonder
What's suddenly smashed.

An earthquake's commotion,
For moving things serves;
But it's hardly the notion
For hinges and nerves.

Let us, consequently,
(Since mercy's a treasure,)
Just slam the door gently,
When we have the leisure.

SLAM BANG.

THE STORY OF HOW FIVE JACKS BEAT FOUR ACES.

During the session of the United States District grand jury, a witness was called before them named Scipio Chotean, a half-breed Creek Indian and negro, bright, sharp and intelligent. He was the last witness to be called before adjournment that day. After his examination some one of the grand jury, who knew him, asked if he was the man who had four aces beaten.

He answered "Yes, sah; I'se de man."

"Will you have any objection to telling it?"

"I'se afeard it will get me into trouble; but if de judge is willin'," appealing to the foreman, "I will tell it."

The judge consented, then Scipio said—

"You see, I lives on the cattle trail from Texas through the Creek country to Kansas, and I was out in de road one day, and I meets a gentleman ahead of a big drove of cattle.

"He says, 'Old man, do you live in dis country?'

"I says, 'Yes, sah.'

"He says, 'It's a mighty poor country; how do you make a livin'?'

"I says, 'Sah, 'tis putty good country; we has plenty of meat and bread, and I makes a good livin' a—'

"He says, 'Old man, do you ever play keards?'

"I says, 'Yes, sah; I does, sometimes.'

"He says, 'Would you have any objection to play a little draw?'

"I says, 'No, sah.'

"So we gets off our horses alongside de road, and sat down, and I pulls out de keards. Well, in a short time I beat de gentleman out of sixty-two dollars and a half, and I t'ought I had him; so I puts up a hand on him—for I is, do I say it myself, a mighty smart hand at keards—and I know'd he would hab tree jacks and I would hab tree aces, and in de draw I know'd he would git de oder jack and I would git de oder ace. So he raises a bit and I raises on back, till at last I put up all de money I had winned from the gemmen and all de change I had, and I know'd I had him. Well, in de draw de gent got de oder jack and I got de oder ace. De gent wanted to bet, but I claimed a sight for de money, told him I had an invincible hand dat couldn't be beat.

"He says, 'Old man, dem is right good britches you is got on: how much did dey cost?'

"I says, 'Yes, sah; dey cost me $10.'

"He says, 'I puts up $10 agin dem.'

"I says, 'Berry well, sah; but I tells you I got a invincible hand.'

"He put up de money, and I holds up my legs, and he pulls off de britches and lays dem down.

"'Now, sah,' says I, 'I told you I had a invincible hand what can't be beat. I'se got fo' aces.'

"De gent says, 'Old man, did you ever hear of five jacks beatin' fo' aces?'

"I says, 'I'se heard it, sah, but I'se never seed it, and if you convince me ob it, de money's yourn.'

"'Berry well,' he says, laying down one keerd; 'ain't dat de jack ob clubs?'

"'Yes, sah,' I says, 'dat am de jack ob clubs.'

"He lays down anoder keerd; 'ain't dat de jack of spades?'

"'Yes, sah, dat is de jack ob spades.'

"He lays down anoder; 'ain't dat de jack ob diamonds?'

"'Yes, sah, dat is de jack ob diamonds.'

"He puts down anoder, and says, 'ain't dat de jack of hearts?'

"I says, 'Yes, sah, dat am de jack ob hearts.'

"Den he runs his hand in his bosom, and pulls out a great long pistol and points it at me, and says, 'ain't dat jack 'hand?'

"I says, 'Yes, sah.'

"And he says, 'Ain't dat five jacks? and don't dat win de money?'

"And I says, 'Yes, sah, dat is Jack Hand, and dat is five jacks, and five jacks beats an invincible hand.'

"So he puts de money in his pocket, and ties my britches on hind ob his saddle, and tells me to scatter—and I did.

"You see, it sarved me right; for I t'ought de man was a green Missourian when I put up de hand on him, but he was an Arkansaw chap, and I finds dem mighty sharp, Judge."

The above is vouched by the foreman and several members of the grand jury as fact—every word of it.

HELPING A VOTER.

In a contest for the representation of Gloucestershire, Eng., last fall, Mr. Marling's partner, calling upon a voter in the Forest of Dean, found him digging potatoes. The voter pleaded this as an excuse for not voting. "To-morrow's market-day, and I shall lose the sale of these potatoes." "Then give me your fork," said the canvasser; "I'll dig the potatoes while you go and vote." The man slouched off to the poll, voted, and returning, peeped through his parlor-window, to see Mr. —— at work in the potato ground. "He uses the fork well, and a stroke of work will perhaps do him good. I'll have a pipe." And a pipe he had, keeping his eye, however, all the time on Mr. —— in the garden, till the canvasser, growing tired, walked around to the cottage, to find how nicely he had been tricked into an hour's hard labor, while the free and independent freeholder was with the utmost coolness taking his ease with a "churchwarden" in the chimney-corner.

THE REASON WHY.

The following incident is reported by the Detroit Free Press as having occurred between a grocer and a customer:—"'Thirty-two cents!' echoed a woman yesterday, when her grocer charged her that sum for a pound of butter. 'Yes, 'um,' he replied, with a bland smile. 'You see the grocers can't carry much of a reserve, and we can't turn our collaterals at a sacrifice. If the government calls in the bonds due in 1874, and the imports of bullion tend to ease the money market a little, butter must find its level with everything else. Butter is very panicky just now, but I think the worst is over.' The explanation was too much for the customer, and she paid the money without further grumbling."

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.

A WELCOME BY ALFRED TENNYSON, POET LAUREATE.

I.

The Sea of him with whom we strove for power—
Whose will is lord through all his world-domain—
Who made the serf a man, and burst his chain—
Has given our Prince his own Imperial Flower,
Alexandrowna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a people's pride,
To Britain, when her flowers begin to blow!
From love to love, from home to home you go,
From mother unto mother, stately bride,
Marie Alexandrowna.

II.

The golden news along the steppes is blown,
And at thy name the Tartar tents are stirred;
Elburz and all the Caucasus have heard,
And all the sultry palms of India known,
Alexandrowna.

The voices of our universal sea,
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,
The Maoris and that Isle of Continent,
And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,
Marie Alexandrowna!

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty life—
Yet Harold's England fell to Norman swords;
Yet thine own land has bowed to Tartar hordes
Since English Harold gave its throne a wife.
Alexandrowna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs that swing,
And float or fall, in endless ebb and flow;
But who love best have best the grace to know
That Love by right divine is deathless king.
Marie Alexandrowna!

IV.

And love has led thee to the stranger land,
Where men are bold and strongly say their say—
See, empire upon empire smiles to-day,
As thou with thy young lover hand in hand,
Alexandrowna!

So now thy fuller life is in the West,
Whose hand at home was gracious to thy poor,
Thy name was blest within the narrow door;
Here, also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,
Marie Alexandrowna!

V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again?
Or at thy coming, Princess, everywhere,
The blue Heaven break, and some diviner air
Breathe through the world and change the hearts of men,
Alexandrowna?

But hearts that change not, love that cannot cease,
And peace be yours, the peace of soul in soul
And howsoever this wild world may roll,
Between your peoples truth and manful peace,
Alfred—Alexandrowna!

EAST LYNNE;

OR,

THE ELOPEMENT.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTAIN THORN AT WEST LYNNE.

"Barbara, how fine the day seems!"

"It is a beautiful day, mamma."

"I do think I should be all the better for going out."

"I am sure you would, mamma," was Barbara's answer. "If you went out more, you would find the benefit; every fine day you ought to do so. I will go and ask papa if he can spare Benjamin and the carriage." She waltzed gayly out of the room, but returned in a moment.

"Mamma, it is all right. Benjamin is gone to get the carriage ready. You would like a bit of luncheon before you go—I will order the tray."

"Anything you please, dear," said the sweet-tempered gentlewoman. "I don't know why, but I feel glad to go out to-day; perhaps because it is lovely."

Benjamin made ready his carriage and himself, drove out of the yard at the back, and brought the carriage round to the front gate.

The carriage—or phaeton, as it was often called—was a somewhat old fashioned concern, as many country things are apt to be. A small box in front for the driver, and a wide seat with a head behind, accommodating Barbara well between them when Mr. and Mrs. Hare both sat in it.

Benjamin drew the rug carefully over his mistress's knees—the servants did not like Mr. Hare, but would have laid down their lives for her—ascended to his box, and drove them to their destination, the linen-draper's. It was an excellent shop, situated a little beyond the office of Mr. Carlyle, and Mrs. Hare and Barbara were soon engaged in that occupation, said to possess for all women a fascination. They had been in it about an hour, when Mrs. Hare discovered that her bag was missing.

"I must have left it in the carriage, Barbara. Go and bring it, will you, my dear? The pattern of that silk is in it."

Barbara went out. The carriage and Benjamin and the sleek old horse were all waiting drowsily together. Barbara could not see the bag, and she appealed to the servant.

"Find mamma's bag, Benjamin. It must be somewhere in the carriage."

Benjamin got off his box and began to search. Barbara waited, gazing listlessly down the street. The sun was shining brilliantly, and its rays fell upon the large cable chain of a gentleman, who was sauntering idly up the pavement, making its gold links and its drooping seal and key glitter, as they crossed his waistcoat. It shone also upon the enamelled gold studs of his shirt front, making them glitter; and, as he suddenly raised his ungloved hand, a white hand, to stroke his mustache—by which action you know a vain man—a diamond ring that he wore gleamed with a light that was positively dazzling. Involuntarily Barbara thought of the description her brother Richard had given of certain dazzling jewels worn by another.

She watched him advance. He was a handsome man of, perhaps, seven or eight-and-twenty, tall, slender and well made, his eyes and hair black. A very pleasant expression sat upon his countenance; and on the left hand he wore a light buff kid glove, and was swinging its fellow by the fingers, apparently in deep thought, as he softly whistled to himself. But for the light cast at that moment by the sun, Barbara might not have noticed the jewelry, or connected it in her mind with the other jewelry in that unhappy secret.

"Hollins, Thorn, is that you? Just step over here!"

The speaker was Otway Bethel, who was on the opposite side of the street; the spoken-to, the gentleman with the jewelry. But the latter was in a brown study, and did not hear. Bethel called out again, louder.

"Captain Thorn!"

That was heard. Captain Thorn nodded, and turned short off across the street. Barbara stood like one in a dream, her brain, her mind, her fancy all a confused mass together.

"Here's the bag, Miss Barbara. It had got among the folds of the rug."

Benjamin held it out to her, but she took no notice; she was unconscious of all external things, save one. That she beheld the real murderer of Hallijohn, she entertained no manner of doubt. In every particular he tallied with the description given by Richard; tall, dark, vain, handsome, delicate hands, jewelry, and—Captain Thorn! Barbara's cheeks grew white, and her heart turned sick.

"The bag, Miss Barbara."

Away tore Barbara, leaving Benjamin and the bag in wonder. She had caught sight of Mr. Wainwright, the surgeon, at a little distance, and sped toward him.

"Mr. Wainwright," began she, forgetting ceremony in her agitation, "you see that gentleman talking to Otway Bethel—who is he?"

Mr. Wainwright had to put his glasses across the bridge of his nose before he could answer, for he was short-sighted. "That? Oh, it is a Captain Thorn. He is visiting the Herberts, I believe."

"Where does he come from? Where does he live?" reiterated Barbara in her eagerness.

"I don't know anything about him. I saw him this morning with young Smith, and he told me he was a friend of the Herberts. You are not looking well, Miss Barbara."

She made no answer. Captain Thorn and Mr. Bethel came walking down the street, and the latter saluted her, but she was too much confused to respond to it. Mr. Wainwright then wished her good-day, and Barbara walked slowly back. Mrs. Hare was appearing at the shop door.

"My dear, how long you are! Cannot the bag be found?"

"I went to speak to Mr. Wainwright," answered Barbara, mechanically taking the bag from Benjamin and giving it to her mother, her whole heart and eyes still absorbed with that one object moving away in the distance.

"You look pale, child. Are you well?"

"Oh, yes—quite. Let us get our shopping over, mamma."

She moved on to their places at the counter as she spoke, eager to "get it over" and be at home, that she might have time for thought. Mrs. Hare wondered what had come to her: the pleased interest displayed in their purchases previously was now gone, and she sat inattentive and absorbed.

"Now, my dear, it is only waiting for you to choose. Which of the two silks will you have?"

"Either. Any. Take which you like, mamma."

"Barbara, what has come to you?"

"I believe I am tired," said Barbara, with a forced laugh, as she compelled herself to pay some sort of attention. "I don't like the green: I will take the other."

They arrived at home. Barbara got just five minutes alone in her chamber before the dinner was on the table. All the conclusion she could come to was, she could do nothing save tell the facts to Archibald Carlyle.

How could she contrive to see him? The business might admit of no delay. She supposed she must go to East Lynne that evening; but where would be her excuse for it at home? Puzzling over it, she went down to dinner. During the meal, Mrs. Hare began talking of some silk she had purchased for a mantle. She should have it made like Miss Carlyle's new one. When Miss Carlyle was at the Grove, the other day, about Wilson's character, she offered her the pattern, and she, Mrs. Hare, would send one of the servants up for it after dinner.

"Oh, mamma, let me go!" burst forth Barbara, and so vehemently spoke she, that the justice paused in his carving, and demanded what ailed her. Barbara made some timid excuse.

"Her eagerness is natural, Richard," smiled Mrs. Hare. "Barbara thinks she shall get a peep at the baby, I expect. All young folks are fond of babies."

Barbara's face flushed crimson, but she did not contradict the opinion. She could not eat her dinner—she was too full of poor Richard; she played with it, and then sent away her plate nearly untouched.

"That's through the finery she has been buying," pronounced Justice Hare. "Her head is stuffed up with it."

No opposition was offered to Barbara's going to East Lynne. She reached it just as their dinner was over. It was for Miss Carlyle she asked.

"Miss Carlyle is not at home, miss. She is spending the day out; and my lady does not receive visitors yet."

It was a sort of checkmate. Barbara was compelled to say she would see Mr. Carlyle. Peter ushered her into the drawing-room, and Mr. Carlyle came to her.

"I am so sorry to disturb you—to have asked for you," began Barbara with a burning face, for, somehow, a certain evening interview of hers with him, twelve months before, was disagreeably present to her. Never, since that evening of agitation, had Barbara suffered herself to betray emotion to Mr. Carlyle; her manner to him had been calm, courteous and indifferent. And she now more frequently called him "Mr. Carlyle" than "Archibald."

"Take a seat—take a seat, Barbara."

"I asked for Miss Carlyle," she continued, "for mamma is in want of a pattern that she promised to lend her; but, in point of fact, it was you I wished to see. You remember the Lieutenant Thorn whom Richard spoke of as being the real criminal?"

"Yes."

"I think he is at West Lynne."

Mr. Carlyle was aroused to eager interest.

"He! That same Thorn?"

"It can be no other. Mamma and I were shopping to-day, and I went out for her bag which she left in the carriage. While Benjamin was getting it, I saw a stranger coming up the street—a tall, good-looking, dark-haired man, with a conspicuous gold chain and studs. The sun was full upon him, causing the ornaments to shine, especially a diamond ring which he wore, for he had one hand raised to his face. The thought flashed over me, 'That is just like the description Richard gave of the man Thorn.' Why the idea should have occurred to me in that strange manner, I do not know, but it most assuredly did occur, though I did not really suppose him to be the same. Just then I heard him spoken to by some one on the other side of the street; it was Otway Bethel, and he called him Captain Thorn."

"This is curious, indeed, Barbara. I did not know any stranger was at West Lynne."

"I saw Mr. Wainwright, and asked him who it was. He said a Captain Thorn, a friend of the Herberts. A Lieutenant Thorn four or five years ago would probably be Captain Thorn now."

Mr. Carlyle nodded, and there was a pause.

"What can be done?" asked Barbara.

Mr. Carlyle was passing one hand over his brow; it was a habit of his when in deep thought.

"It is hard to say what is to be done, Barbara. The description you give of this man certainly tallies with that given by Richard. Did he look like a gentleman?"

"Very much so. A remarkably aristocratic-looking man, as it struck me."

Mr. Carlyle again nodded assentingly. He remembered Richard's words, when describing the other; "an out-and-out aristocrat." "Of course, Barbara, the first thing must be to try and ascertain whether it is the same," he observed. "If we find it is, then we must deliberate upon future measures. I will see what I can pick up, and let you know."

Barbara rose. Mr. Carlyle escorted her across the hall, and then strolled down the park by her side, deep in the subject; and quite unconscious that Lady Isabel's jealous eyes were watching them from her dressing-room window.

"You say he seemed intimate with Otway Bethel?"

"As to being intimate, I cannot say. Otway Bethel spoke as though he knew him."

"This must have caused excitement to Mrs. Hare."

"You forget, Archibald, that mamma was not told anything about Thorn," was the answer of Barbara. "The uncertainty would have worried her to death. All Richard said to her was, that he was innocent, that it was a stranger who did the deed, and she asked for no particulars; she has implicit faith in Richard's truth."

"True; I did forget," replied Mr. Carlyle. "I wish we could find out some one who knew the other Thorn; to ascertain that they were the same, would be a great point gained."

He went as far as the park gates with Barbara, shook hands and wished her good-evening. Scarcely had she departed, when Mr. Carlyle saw two gentlemen advancing from the opposite direction, in one of whom he recognized Tom Herbert, and the other—instinct told him—was Captain Thorn. He waited till they came up.

"If this isn't lucky, seeing you," cried Mr. Tom Herbert, who was a free-and-easy sort of gentleman, the second son of a brother justice of Mr. Hare's. "I wish to goodness you'd give us a draught of your cider, Carlyle. We went up to Beauchamp's for a stroll, but found them all out; and I'm awful thirsty. Captain Thorn, Carlyle."

Mr. Carlyle invited them to his house, and ordered in refreshments. Young Herbert coolly threw himself into an arm-chair and lit a cigar. "Come, Thorn," cried he, "here's a weed for you."

Captain Thorn glanced toward Mr. Carlyle; he appeared of a far more gentlemanly nature than Tom Herbert.

"You'll have one, too," said Herbert, holding out his cigar-case. "Oh, I forgot; you are a muff; don't smoke one twice a year. I say, how's Lady Isabel?"

"Very ill still."

"By Jove, is she, though? Tell her I am sorry to hear it, will you, Carlyle? But—I say! will she smell the smoke?" asked he, with a mixture of alarm and concern in the face.

Mr. Carlyle reassured him on the point, and turned to Captain Thorn.

"Are you acquainted with this neighborhood?"

Captain Thorn smiled. "I only reached West Lynne yesterday."

"You were never here before, then?" continued Mr. Carlyle, setting down the last as a probably evasive answer.

"No."

"He and my brother Jack, you know, are in the same regiment," put in Tom, with scanty ceremony. "Jack had invited him down for some fishing and that, and Thorn arrives. But he never sent word he was coming, you see; Jack had given him up, and is off on some Irish expedition, the deuce knows where. Precious unlucky that it should have happened so. Thorn says he shall out short his stay, and go again."

The conversation turned upon fishing, and in the heat of the argument, the stranger mentioned a certain pond, and its famous eels—"the Low Pond."

Mr. Carlyle looked at him, speaking, however, in a careless manner.

"Which do you mean? We have two ponds not far apart, each called the 'Low Pond.'"

"I mean the one on an estate about three miles from here—Squire Thorpe's, unless I am mistaken."

Mr. Carlyle smiled.

"I think you must have been in the neighborhood before, Captain Thorn. Squire Thorpe is dead, and the property has passed to his daughter's husband, and that Low Pond was filled up three years ago."

"I have heard a friend mention it," was Captain Thorn's reply, spoken in an indifferent tone, though he evidently wished not to pursue the subject.

Mr. Carlyle, by easy degrees, turned the conversation upon Swainson, the place whence Richard Hare's Captain Thorn was suspected to have come. The present Captain Thorn said he knew it "a little," he had once been "staying there a short time." Mr. Carlyle became nearly convinced that Barbara's suspicions were correct. The descriptions certainly agreed, so far as he could judge, in the most minute particulars. The man before him wore two rings, a diamond—and a very beautiful diamond, too—on the one hand; a seal ring on the other; his hands were delicate to a degree, and his handkerchief, a cambric one of unusually fine texture, was not entirely guiltless of scent. Mr. Carlyle quitted the room for a moment, and summoned Joyce to him.

"My lady has been asking for you," said Joyce.

"Tell her I will be up the moment these gentlemen leave. Joyce," he added, "find an excuse to come into the room presently; you can bring something or other in; I want you to look at this stranger who is with young Mr. Herbert. Notice him well; I fancy you may have seen him before."

Mr. Carlyle returned to the room, leaving Joyce surprised. However, she presently followed, taking in some water, and lingered a few minutes, apparently placing the things on the table in better order.

When the two departed, Mr. Carlyle called Joyce, before proceeding to his wife's room. "Well," he questioned, "did you recognize him?"

"Not at all, sir. He seemed quite strange to me."

"Cast your thoughts back, Joyce. Did you never see him in years gone by?"

Joyce looked puzzled, and she replied in the negative.

"Is he the man, think you, who used to ride over from Swainson to see Afy?"

Joyce's face flushed crimson. "Oh, sir!" was all she uttered.

"The name is the same—Thorn; I thought it possible the men might be," observed Mr. Carlyle.

"Sir, I cannot say. I never saw that Captain Thorn but once, and I don't know—I don't know"—Joyce spoke slowly and with consideration—"that I should at all know him again. I did not think of him when I looked at this gentleman; but, at any rate, no appearance in this one struck upon my memory as being familiar."

So from Joyce Mr. Carlyle obtained no clue, one way or the other. The following day he sought out Otway Bethel.

"Are you intimate with that Captain Thorn who is staying with the Herberts?" asked he.

"Yes," answered Bethel, derisively, "if passing a couple of hours in his company can constitute intimacy. That's all I have seen of Thorn."

"Are you sure?" pursued Mr. Carlyle.

"Sure!" returned Bethel; "why, what are you driving at now? I called in at Herberts' the night before last, and Tom asked me to stay the evening. Thorn had just come. A jolly bout we had; cigars and cold punch."

"Bethel," said Mr. Carlyle, dashing to the point, "is it the Thorn who used to go after Afy Hallijohn? Come, you can tell me if you like."

Bethel remained dumb for a moment, apparently with amazement. "What a confounded lie!" uttered he at length. "Why, it's no more that Thorn than—What Thorn?" he broke off abruptly.

"You are equivocating, Bethel. The Thorn who was mixed up—or said to be—in the Hallijohn affair. Is this the same man?"

"You are a fool, Carlyle, which is what I never took you to be yet," was Mr. Bethel's rejoinder, spoken in a savage tone. "I have told you that I never knew there was any Thorn mixed up with Afy, and I should like to know why my word is not to be believed? I never saw Thorn in my life till I saw him the other night at the Herberts', and that I would take an oath to, if put to it."

Bethel quitted Mr. Carlyle with the last word, and the latter gazed after him, revolving points in his mind. The mention of Thorn's name (the one spoken of by Richard Hare) appeared to excite some sore feeling in Bethel's mind, arousing it to irritation. Mr. Carlyle remembered that it had done so previously, and now it had done so again; and yet Bethel was an easy-natured man in general, far better tempered than principled. That there was something hidden, some mystery connected with the affair, Mr. Carlyle felt sure; but he could not attempt so much as a guess at what it might be. And his interview with Bethel brought him no nearer the point he wished to find out—whether this Thorn was the same man. In walking back to his office, he met Mr. Tom Herbert.

"Does Captain Thorn purpose making a long stay with you?" he stopped him to inquire.

"He's gone; I have just seen him off the train," was the reply of Tom Herbert. "It seemed rather slow with him without Jack, so he docked his visit, and says he'll pay us one when Jack's to the fore."

As Mr. Carlyle went home to dinner that evening, he entered the Grove, ostensibly to make a short call on Mrs. Hare. Barbara, on the tenterhooks of impatience, accompanied him outside when he departed, and walked down the path.

"What have you learned?" she eagerly asked.

"Nothing satisfactory," was the reply of Mr. Carlyle. "And the man has left again."

"Left!" uttered Barbara.

Mr. Carlyle explained. He told her how they had come to his house the previous evening after Barbara's departure, and his encounter with Tom Herbert that day; he mentioned, also, his interview with Bethel.

"Can he have gone on purpose, fearing consequences?" wondered Barbara.

"Scarcely; or why should he have come?"

"You did not suffer any word to escape you last night, causing him to suspect for a moment that he was doubted?"

"Not any. You would make a bad lawyer, Barbara."

"Who or what is he?"

"An officer in her majesty's service, in John Herbert's regiment. I ascertained no more. Tom said he was of good family. But I cannot help suspecting it is the same."

"Can nothing more be done?"

"Nothing, in the present stage of the affair," continued Mr. Carlyle, as he passed through the gate to continue his way. "We can only wait on again with what patience we may, hoping that time will bring about its own elucidation."

Barbara pressed her forehead down on the cold iron of the gate as his footsteps died away. "Ay, to wait on," she murmured, "to wait on in dreary pain; to wait on, perhaps for years, perhaps forever! And poor Richard—wearing out his days in poverty and exile!"

CHAPTER XX.

GOING FROM HOME.

"I should recommend a complete change of scene altogether, Mr. Carlyle. Say some place on the French or Belgian coast. Sea-bathing might do wonders."

"Should you think it well for her to go so far from home?"

"I should. In these cases of protracted weakness, where you can do nothing but try to coax the strength back again, change of air and scene are of immense benefit."

"I will propose it to her," said Mr. Carlyle.

"I have just done so," replied Dr. Martin, who was the other speaker. "She met it with objection, which I expected, for invalids naturally feel a disinclination to move from home. But it is necessary that she should go."

The object of their conversation was Lady Isabel. Years had gone on, and there were three children now at East Lynne—Isabel, William, and Archibald—the latter twelve months old. Lady Isabel had, a month or two back, been attacked with illness; she recovered from it—that is she recovered from the disorder; but it had left her in an alarming state of weakness. Mr. Wainwright tried in vain to grapple with the weakness; she seemed to get worse instead of better, and Dr. Martin was summoned from Lynneborough. The best thing he could recommend—as you have seen—was a change of air.

Lady Isabel was unwilling to take the advice; more especially to go so far as the "French coast." And but for a circumstance that seemed to have happened purposely to induce her to decide, would probably never have gone. Mrs. Ducie—the reader may not have forgotten her name—had on conjunction with her husband, the Honorable Augustus, somewhat run out at the elbows, and found it convenient to enter for a time on the less expensive life of the Continent. For eighteen months she had been staying in Paris, the education of her younger daughters being the plea put forth, and a very convenient plea it is, and serves hundreds. Isabel had two or three letters from her during her absence, and she now received another, saying they were going to spend a month or two at Boulogne-sur-Mer. Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Wainwright, and Dr. Martin—in short, everybody—declared that this must remove all Lady Isabel's unwillingness to go from home, for Mrs. Ducie's society would do away with the loneliness she had anticipated, which had been the ostensible score of her objection.

"Boulogne-sur-Mer, of all places in the world!" remonstrated Lady Isabel. "It is spoken of as being crowded and vulgar."

"The more amusing for you, my lady," cried Dr. Martin, while Mr. Carlyle laughed at her. And finding she had no chance against them all, she consented to go, and plans were hastily decided upon.

"Joyce," said Lady Isabel to her waiting-maid, "I shall leave you at home; I must take Wilson instead."

"Oh, my lady! what have I done?"

"You have done all that you ought, Joyce, but you must stay with the children. If I may not take them, the next best thing will be to leave them in your charge, not Miss Carlyle's," she said, sinking her voice; "if it were Wilson who remained, I could not do that."

"My lady, I must do whatever you think best. I wish I could attend you and stay with them, but of course I cannot do both."

"I am sent away to get health and strength, but it may be I shall die, Joyce. If I never come back, will you promise to remain with my children?"

Joyce felt a creeping sensation in her veins; the sobs rose in her throat, but she swallowed them down, and constrained her voice to calmness. "My lady, I hope you will come back to us as well as you used to be. I trust you will hope so too, my lady, and not give way to low spirits."

"I sincerely hope and trust I shall," answered Lady Isabel, fervently. "Still, there's no telling, for I am very ill. Joyce, give me your promise. In case of the worst, you will remain with the children."

"I will, my lady—as long as I am permitted."

"And be kind to them and love them, and shield them from—from—any unkindness that may be put upon them," she added, her head full of Miss Carlyle, "and talk to them sometimes of their poor mother, who is gone."

"I will, I will; oh, my lady, I will!" And Joyce sat down in the rocking chair as Lady Isabel quitted her, and burst into tears.

Mr. Carlyle and Lady Isabel, with Wilson and Peter in attendance, arrived at Boulogne, and proceeded to the Hotel des Bains. It may be as well to mention that Peter had been transferred from Miss Carlyle's service to theirs, when the establishment was first formed at East Lynne. Upon entering the hotel, they inquired for Mrs. Ducie, and then a disappointment awaited them; a letter was handed them, which had arrived that morning from Mrs. Ducie, expressing her regret that certain family arrangements prevented her visiting Boulogne; she was proceeding to some of the baths in Germany instead.

"I might almost have known it," remarked Isabel. "She was always the most changeable of women."

Mr. Carlyle went out in search of lodgings, Isabel objecting to remain in the bustling hotel. He succeeded in finding some very desirable ones, situated in the Rue de l'Ecu, near the port, and they moved into them. He thought the journey had done her good, for she looked better, and said she already felt stronger. Mr. Carlyle remained with her three days; he had promised only one, but he was pleased with everything around him, pleased with Isabel's returning glimpses of health, and amused with the scenes of the busy town.

The tide served at eight o'clock the following morning, and Mr. Carlyle left by the Folkestone boat. Wilson made his breakfast, and after swallowing it in haste, he returned to his wife's room to say farewell.

"Good-bye, my love," he said, stooping to kiss her, "take care of yourself."

"Give my dear love to the darlings, Archibald. And—and—"

"And what?" he asked. "I have not a moment to lose."

"Do not get making love to Barbara Hare while I am away."

She spoke in a tone half jest, half serious—could he but have seen how her heart was beating! Mr. Carlyle took it wholly as a jest, and went away laughing. Had he believed she was serious, he could have been little more surprised had she charged him not to go about the country on a dromedary.

Isabel rose later, and lingered over her breakfast, listless enough. She was wondering how she could make the next few weeks pass; what she should do with her time. She had taken two sea-baths since her arrival, but they had appeared not to agree with her, leaving her low and shivering afterward, so it was not deemed advisable that she should attempt more. It was a lovely morning, and she determined to venture on to the pier, to where they had sat on the previous evening. She had not Mr. Carlyle's arm, but it was not far, and she could take a good rest at the end of it.

She went, attended by Peter, took her seat, and told him to come for her in an hour. She watched the strollers on the pier, as they had done the previous evening; not in crowds now, but stragglers, coming on at intervals. There came a gouty man, in a list shoe, there came three young ladies and their governess, there came two fast puppies in shooting-jackets and eye-glasses, which they turned with a broad stare on Lady Isabel; but there was something about her which caused them to drop their glasses and their ill manners together. After an interval, there appeared another, a tall, handsome, gentlemanly man. Her eyes fell upon him; and—what was it that caused every nerve in her frame to vibrate, every pulse to quicken? Whose form was it that was thus advancing, and changing the monotony of her mind into tumult? It was that of one whom she was soon to find had never been entirely forgotten.

Captain Levison came slowly on, approaching the part of the pier where she sat. He glanced at her; not with the hardihood displayed by the two young men, but with quite sufficiently evident admiration.

"What a lovely girl!" thought he to himself. "Who can she be, sitting there alone?"

All at once a recollection flashed into his mind; he raised his hat and extended his hand, his fascinating smile in full play.

"I certainly cannot be mistaken. Have I not the honor of once more meeting Lady Isabel Vane?"

She rose from her seat, and allowed him to take her hand, answering a few words at random, for her wits seemed wool-gathering.

"I beg your pardon—I should have said Lady Isabel Carlyle. Time has elapsed since we parted, and in the pleasure of seeing you again so unexpectedly, I thought of you as you were then."

She sat down again, the brilliant flush of emotion dying away upon her cheeks. It was the loveliest face Francis Levison had seen since he saw hers, and he thought so as he gazed at it.

"What can have brought you to this place?" he inquired, taking a seat beside her.

"I have been ill," she explained, "and am ordered to the sea-side. We should not have come here but for Mrs. Ducie: we expected to meet her. Mr. Carlyle only left me this morning."

"Mrs. Ducie is off to Ems. I see them occasionally. They have been fixtures in Paris for some time. You do indeed look ill!" he abruptly added, in a tone of sympathy, "alarmingly ill. Is there anything I can do for you?"

She was aware that she looked unusually ill at that moment, for the agitation and surprise of meeting him were fading away, leaving her face an ashy whiteness. Exceedingly vexed and angry with herself did she feel that the meeting him should have power to call forth emotion. Until that moment she was unconscious that she retained any sort of feeling for Captain Levison.

"Perhaps I have ventured out too early," she said, in a tone that would seem to apologize for her looks; "I think I will return. I shall meet my servant, no doubt. Good-morning, Captain Levison."

"But indeed you do not appear fit to walk alone," he remonstrated. "You must allow me to see you safely home."

Drawing her hand within his own quite as a matter of course, as he had done many a time in days gone by, he proceeded to assist her down the pier. Lady Isabel, conscious of her own feelings, felt that it was not quite the thing to walk thus familiarly with him, but he was a sort of relation of the family—a connection at any rate, and she could find no ready excuse for declining.

"Have you seen Lady Mount Severn lately?" he inquired.

"I saw her when I was in London this spring, with Mr. Carlyle. The first time we have met since my marriage: and we do not correspond. Lord Mount Severn has paid us two or three visits at East Lynne. They are in town yet, I believe."

"For all I know; I have not seen them, or England either, for ten months. I have been staying in Paris, and got here yesterday."

"A long leave of absence," she observed.

"Oh, I have left the army. I sold out. The truth is, Lady Isabel—for I don't mind telling you—things are rather down with me at present. My old uncle has behaved shamefully; he has married again."

"I heard that Sir Peter had married."

"He is seventy-three—the old simpleton. Of course this materially alters my prospects, for it is just possible he may have a son of his own now; and my creditors all came down upon me. They allowed me to run into debt with complacency when I was heir to the title and estates, but as soon as Sir Peter's marriage appeared in the papers, myself and my consequence dropped a hundred per cent.; credit was stopped, and I dunned for payment. So I thought I'd cut it altogether, and I sold out and came abroad."

"Leaving your creditors?"

"What else could I do? My uncle would not pay them, or increase my allowance."

"What are your prospects, then?" resumed Lady Isabel.

"Prospects? Do you see that little ragged boy, throwing stones into the harbor?—it is well if the police don't drop upon him. Ask him what his prospects are, and he would stare in your face, and say, 'None.' Mine are on a like par."

"You may succeed St. Peter yet."

"I may; but I may not. When those old idiots get a young wife—"

"Have you quarrelled with Sir Peter?" interrupted Lady Isabel.

"I should quarrel with him as he deserves, if it would do any good; but I might get my allowance stopped. Self-interest, you see, Lady Isabel, is the order of the day with most of us."

"Do you purpose staying in Boulogne long?"

"I don't know. As I may find amusement. Paris is a fast capital, with its heated rooms and its late hours, and I came down for the refreshment of a few sea-dips. Am I walking too fast for you?"

"You increased your pace alarmingly, when you spoke of Sir Peter's marriage. And I am not sorry for it," she added, good-naturedly, "for it has proved to me how strong I am getting. A week ago I could not have walked half so fast."

He interrupted with eager apologies, and soon they reached her home. Captain Levison entered with her—uninvited. He probably deemed between connections great ceremony might be dispensed with, and he sat a quarter of an hour, chatting, to amuse her. When he rose, he inquired what she meant to do with herself in the afternoon.

"To lie down," replied Lady Isabel. "I am not strong enough to sit up all day."

"Should you be going out again afterward, you must allow me to take care of you," he observed. "I am glad that I happened to be here, for I am sure you are not fit to wander out without an arm, and only followed by a servant. When Mr. Carlyle comes, he will thank me for my pains."

What was she to urge in objection? Simply nothing. He spoke, let us not doubt, from a genuine wish to serve her, in a plain, easy tone, as any acquaintance might speak. Lady Isabel schooled herself severely. If those old feelings were not quite dead within her, why, she must smother them down again as effectually as if they were; the very fact of recognizing such to her own heart, brought its glow of shame to her brow. She would meet Captain Levison, and suffer his companionship, as she would that of the most indifferent stranger.

It was just the wrong way for her to go to work, though.

As the days passed on, Lady Isabel improved wonderfully. She was soon able to go to the sands in a morning and sit there to enjoy the sea-air, watching the waves come up or recede with the tide. She made no acquaintance whatever in the place, and when she had a companion, it was Captain Levison. He would frequently join her there, sometimes take her, almost always give her his arm home. Of all things, she disliked having to take his arm; would a thousand times over rather have taken good old Peter's. A secret prick of the conscience whispered it might be better if she did not. One day she said, in a joking sort of manner—she would not say it in any other—that now she was strong, she had no need of his arm and his escort. He demanded, in evident astonishment, what had arisen that he might not still afford it, seeing her husband was not with her to give her his. She had no answer to reply to this, no excuse to urge, and, in default of one, took his arm, as usual. In the evening he would be ready to take her to the pier, but they sat apart, mixing not with the bustling crowd—he lending to his manner, as he conversed with her, all that it could call up of fascination—and fascination such as Francis Levison's might be dangerous to any ear in the sweet evening twilight. The walk over, he left her at her own door; she never asked him in in the evening, and he did not intrude without, as he sometimes would of a morning.

Now, where was the help for this? You may say that she should have remained in-doors, and not have subjected herself to his companionship. But the remaining in-doors would not have brought her health, and it was health that she was staying in Boulogne to acquire, and the sooner it came the better pleased she would be, for she wanted to be at home with her husband and children.

In a fortnight from the period of his departure, Mr. Carlyle was expected in Boulogne. But what a marvellous change had this fortnight wrought in Lady Isabel!

She did not dare to analyze her feelings, but she was conscious that all the fresh emotions of her youth had come again. The blue sky seemed as of the sweetest sapphire, the green fields and the waving trees were of an emerald brightness, the perfume of the flowers was more fragrant than any perfume had yet seemed. She knew that the sky, that the grassy plains, the leafy trees, the brilliant flowers, were but as they ever had been; she knew that the sunny atmosphere possessed no more of loveliness or power of imparting beauty than of old; and she knew that the change, the sensation of ecstasy was in her own heart. No wonder that she shrank from self-examination.

The change from listless languor to her present feelings brought the hue and contour of health to her face far sooner than anything else could have done. She went down with Captain Levison to meet Mr. Carlyle the evening he came in, and when Mr. Carlyle saw her behind the cords, as he was going to the custom-house, he scarcely knew her. Her features had lost their sharpness, her cheeks wore a rosy flush, and the light of pleasure at meeting him again shone in her eyes.

"What can you have been doing to yourself, my darling?" he uttered, in delight, as he emerged from the custom-house, and took her hands in his. "You look almost well."

"Yes, I am much better, Archibald, but I am warm now, and flushed. We have waited here some time, and the setting sun was full upon us. How long the boat was coming in!"

"The wind was dead against us," replied Mr. Carlyle, wondering who the exquisite was at his wife's side. He thought he remembered his face.

"Captain Levison," said Lady Isabel. "I wrote you word in one of my letters that he was here. Have you forgotten it?"

"Yes, it had slipped from his memory."

"And I am happy that it happened so," said that gentleman, interposing, "for it has enabled me to attend Lady Isabel in some of her walks. She is stronger now, but at first she was unfit to venture alone."

"I feel much indebted to you," said Mr. Carlyle, warmly.

The following day was Sunday, and Francis Levison was asked to dine with them; the first meal he had been invited to in the house. After dinner, when Lady Isabel left them, he grew confidential over his claret to Mr. Carlyle; laying open all his intricate affairs and his cargo of troubles.

"This compulsory exile abroad is becoming intolerable," he concluded; "and a Paris life plays the very deuce with one. Do you see any chance of my getting back to England?"

"Not the least," was the candid answer: "unless you can manage to satisfy or partially satisfy these claims you have been telling me of. Will not Sir Peter assist you?"

"I believe he would, were the case fairly represented to him; but how am I to get over to do it? I have written several letters to him lately, and for some time I got no reply. Then came an epistle from Lady Levison; not short and sweet, but short and sour. It was to the effect that Sir Peter was ill, and could not at present be troubled with business matters."

"He cannot be very ill," remarked Mr. Carlyle; "he passed through West Lynne in his open carriage a week ago."

"He ought to help me," grumbled Captain Levison. "I am his heir, so long as Lady Levison does not give him one. I do not hear that she has expectations."

"You should contrive to see him."

"I know I should; but it is not possible under present circumstances. With these thunder-clouds hanging over me, I dare not set foot in England, and run the risk to be dropped upon. I can stand a few things, but I shudder at the bare idea of a prison. Something peculiar in my idiosyncrasy, I take it, for those who have tried it, say that it is nothing when you're used to it."

"Some one might see him for you."

"Some one!—who? I have quarrelled with my lawyers, Sharp and Steel, of Lincoln's Inn."

"Keen practitioners," put in Mr. Carlyle.

"Too keen for me. I'd send them over the herring-pond if I could. They have served me shamefully since my uncle's marriage. If ever I do come into the Levison estates, they'll be ready to eat their ears off; they would like a finger in a pie with such property as that."

"Shall I see Sir Peter Levison for you?"

"Will you?" returned Captain Levison, his dark eyes lighting up.

"If you like; as your friend, you understand; not as your solicitor; that I decline. I have a slight knowledge of Sir Peter; my father was well acquainted with him; and if I can render *you* any little service, I shall be happy, in return for your kind attention to my wife. I cannot promise to see him for these two or three weeks though," resumed Mr. Carlyle, "for we are terribly busy. I never was so driven; but for being so, I should stay here with my wife."

Francis Levison expressed his gratitude, and the prospect, however remote, of being enabled to return to England, increased his spirits to exultation. Whilst they continued to converse, Lady Isabel sat at the window in the adjoining room, listlessly looking out on the crowds of French, who were crowding to and from the port in their Sunday holiday attire. Looking at them with her eyes, not with her senses; her senses were holding commune with herself, and it was not altogether satisfactory. She was aware that a sensation all too warm, a feeling of attraction toward Francis Levison, was working within her; not a voluntary one; she could no more repress it than she could repress her own sense of being; and, mixed with it, was the stern voice of conscience, overwhelming her with the most lively terror. She would have given all she possessed to be able to overcome it; she would have given half the years of her future life to separate herself at once and forever from the man.

But do not mistake the word terror; or suppose that Lady Isabel Carlyle applied it here in the vulgar acceptation of the term. She did not fear for herself; none could be more conscious of self-rectitude of principle and conduct; and she would have believed it as impossible for her ever to forsake her duty as a wife, a gentlewoman, and a Christian, as for the sun to turn round from west to east. That was not the fear which possessed her; it had never presented itself to her mind; what she did fear was, that further companionship, especially lonely companionship, with Francis Levison might augment the sentiments she entertained for him to a height, that her life, for perhaps years to come, would be one of unhappiness; a sort of concealment; and, more than all, she shrank from the consciousness of the bitter wrong that these sentiments cast upon her husband.

"Archibald, I have a favor to ask you," she said, after Captain Levison's departure. "Take me back with you."

"Impossible, my love. The change is doing you so much good; and I took the apartments for six weeks. You must at least remain that time."

The color flowed painfully into her cheeks. "I cannot stay without you, Archibald."

"Tell me why."

"I am so dull without you," was all she could say. He felt that this was not reason enough for altering an arrangement that was so beneficial to her; so he left her the following morning, commending her to the continued care of Captain Levison.

CHAPTER XXI.

QUITTING THE DANGER.

Lady Isabel was seated on one of the benches of the Petit Camp, as it is called, underneath the ramparts of the upper tower. A week or ten days has passed away since the departure of Mr. Carlyle, and in her health there was a further visible improvement.

It was a still evening, cool for July; no sound was heard save the hum of the summer insects, and Lady Isabel sat in silence with her companion, her rebellious heart beating with a sense of its own happiness. But for the voice of conscience, strong within her; but for the sense of the right and wrong; but for existing things; in short, but that she was a wife, she might have been content so to sit by his side forever, never to wish to move, or to break the silence. Did he read her feelings? He told her, months afterward, that he did; but it may have been a vain boast, an excuse.

"Do you remember the evening, Lady Isabel, just such a one as this, that we all passed at Richmond?" he suddenly asked. "Your father, Mrs. Vane, you, I and others."

"Yes, I remember it. We had spent a pleasant day; the two Miss Challoners were with us. You drove Mrs. Vane home, and I went with papa. You drove recklessly, I recollect, and Mrs. Vane said when we got home that you should never drive her again."

"Which meant, not till the next time. Of all capricious, vain, exacting women, Emma Vane was the worst; and Emma Mount Severn is no improvement upon it; she's a systematic flirt, and nothing better. I drove recklessly on purpose to put her in a fright, and pay her off."

"What had she done to you?"

"Put me in a rage. She had saddled herself upon me, when I wanted—I wished for another to be my companion."

"Blanche Challoner."

"Blanche Challoner!" echoed Captain Levison, in a mocking tone; "what did I care for Blanche Challoner?"

Isabel remembered that he had been supposed in those days to care a great deal for Miss Blanche Challoner—a most lovely girl of seventeen. "Mrs. Vane used to accuse you of caring too much for her," she said, aloud.

"She accused me of caring for some one else more than for Blanche Challoner," he significantly returned; "and for once her jealous surmises were not misplaced. No, Lady Isabel, it was not Blanche Challoner I had wished to drive home. Could you not have given a better guess than that, at the time?" he added, turning to her.

There was no mistaking the tone of his voice or the glance of his eye. Lady Isabel felt a crimson flush rising, and she turned her face away.

"The past is gone, and cannot be recalled," he continued, "but we both played our cards like simpletons. If ever two beings were formed to love each other, you and I were. I sometimes thought you read my feelings—"

Surprise had kept her silent, but she interrupted him now, haughtily enough.

"I must speak, Lady Isabel; it is but a few words, and then I am silent forever. I would have declared myself had I dared, but my uncertain position, my debts, my inability to keep a wife, weighed me down; and, instead of appealing to Sir Peter, as I ought to have done, for the means to assume a position that would justify me in asking for Lord Mount Severn's daughter, I crushed my hopes within me, and suffered you to escape—"

"I will not hear this, Captain Levison," she cried, rising from her seat in anger.

He touched her arm to place her on it again. "One single moment yet, I pray you. I have for years wished that you should know why I lost you—a loss that tells upon me yet. I have bitterly worked out my own folly since. I knew not how passionately I loved you, until you became the wife of another. Isabel, I love you passionately still."

"How dare you presume so to address me?"

She spoke in a cold, dignified tone of hauteur, as it was her bounden duty to speak. But, nevertheless, she was conscious of an undercurrent of feeling, whispering that under other auspices the avowal would have brought to her heart the most intense bliss.

"What I have said can do no hurt now," resumed Captain Levison; "the time has gone by for it; for neither you nor I are likely to forget that you are a wife. We have each chosen our path in life, and must abide by it; the gulf between us is impassable; but the fault was mine. I ought to have avowed my affection, and not have suffered you to throw yourself away upon Mr. Carlyle."

"Throw myself away!" she indignantly uttered, roused to the retort. "Mr. Carlyle is my dear husband; esteemed, respected and beloved. I married him of my own free choice, and I have never repented it; I have grown more attached to him day by day. Look at his noble nature, his noble form; what are you by his side? Your forget yourself, Francis Levison."

He bit his lip. "No, I do not."

"You are talking to me as you have no right to talk," she exclaimed, in agitation. "Who, but you, would so insult me, taking advantage of my momentarily unprotected condition? Would you dare to do it, were Mr. Carlyle within reach? I wish you good-evening, sir."

She walked away as quickly as her tired frame would permit. Captain Levison strode after her. He took forcible possession of her hand, and placed it within his arm.

"I pray you forgive and forget what has escaped me, Lady Isabel. Suffer me to be as before, the kind friend, the anxious brother, endeavoring to be of service to you in the absence of Mr. Carlyle."

"It is what I have suffered you to be, looking upon you as—I may say—a relative," she coldly rejoined, withdrawing her hand from his contact. "Not else should I have permitted your incessant companionship; and this is how you have repaid it! My husband thanked you for your attention to me; could he have read what was in your false heart, he had offered you different sort of thanks, I fancy."

"I ask your pardon, Lady Isabel; I have acknowledged my fault; and I can do no more. I will not so offend again; but there are moments when our dearest feelings break through the conveniences of life, and betray themselves, in spite of our sober judgment. Suffer me to support you down this steep hill," he added, for they were then going over the sharp stones of the Grande Rue; "you are not strong enough to proceed alone, after this evening's long walk."

"You should have thought of that before," she said, with some sarcasm in her tone. "No; I have declined."

So he had to put his arm back, which he was holding out, and she walked on unsupported, with what strength she had, he continuing by her side. Arrived at her own door, she wished him a cold good-evening, and he turned away in the direction of his hotel.

Lady Isabel brushed past Peter, and flew up-stairs, startling Wilson, who had taken possession of the drawing-room to air her smart cap at its window in the absence of her lady.

"My desk, Wilson, immediately," cried she, tearing off her gloves, her bonnet, and her shawl. "Tell Peter to be in readiness to take a letter to the post; and he must walk fast or he will not catch it before the English mail is closed."

The symptoms of sinful happiness throbbing at her heart while Francis Levison told her of his love, spoke plainly to Lady Isabel of the expediency of withdrawing entirely from his society, and his dangerous sophistries; she would be away from the very place that contained him; put the sea between them. So she dashed off a letter to her husband; an urgent summons that he should come for her without delay, for remain away longer, she would not. It is probable she would have started alone, not waiting for Mr. Carlyle, but for a fear of not having sufficient funds for the journey, after the rent and other things were paid.

Mr. Carlyle, when he received the letter and marked its earnest tone, wondered much. In reply, he stated that he would be with her on the following Saturday, and then her returning, or not, with him could be settled. Fully determined not to meet Captain Levison, Isabel, in the intervening days, only went out in a carriage. He called once, and was shown into the drawing-room; but Lady Isabel, who happened to be in her own chamber, sent out a message, which was delivered by Peter. "My lady's compliments, but she must decline receiving visitors."

Sunday morning—it had been impossible for him to get away before—brought Mr. Carlyle. He strongly combated her wish to return home until the six weeks should have expired, he nearly said he would not take her, and she grew earnest over it, almost to agitation.

"Isabel," he said, "let me know your motive, for it appears to me that you have one. The sojourn here is evidently doing you a vast deal of good, and what you urge about 'being dull,' sounds very like nonsense. Tell me what it is."

A sudden impulse flashed over her that she would tell him—the truth. Not tell him that she loved Francis Levison, or that he had spoken to her as he did; she valued her husband too greatly to draw him into any unpleasantness whose end could not be seen; but own to him that she had once felt a passing fancy for Francis Levison, and preferred not to be subjected to his companionship now. Oh, that she had done so! her kind, her noble, her judicious husband! Why did she not? The whole truth, as to her present feelings, it was not expedient that she should tell, but she might have confided to him quite sufficient. He would only have cherished her the more deeply, and sheltered her under his fostering care, safe from harm.

Why did she not? In the impulse of the moment she was about to do so, when Mr. Carlyle, who had been reading a letter from his pocket-book, put it into her hand. Upon what slight threads do events turn! Her thoughts diverted, she remained silent while he opened the letter. It was from Miss Carlyle who had handed it to her brother in the moment of his departure, to carry to Lady Isabel and save postage. Mr. Carlyle had nearly dropped it into the Folkestone post-office.

A letter as stiff as Miss Corny herself. The children were well, and the house was going on well, and she hoped Lady Isabel was better. It filled three sides of note-paper, but that was all the news it contained, and it wound up with the following sentence: "I would continue my epistle, but Barbara Hare, who is to spend the day with us, has just arrived."

Barbara Hare spending the day at East Lynne! That item was quite enough for Lady Isabel; and her heart and her confidence closed to her husband. She must go home to her children, she urged; she could not remain longer away from them; and she urged it at length with tears.

"Nay, Isabel," said Mr. Carlyle, "if you are so much in earnest as this, you shall certainly go back with me."

Then she was like a child let loose from school. She laughed; she danced in her excess of content; she showered kisses on her husband, thanking him in her gleeful gratitude. Mr. Carlyle set it down to her love for him; he arrived at the conclusion that, in reiterating that she could not bear to be away from him, she spoke the fond truth.

"Isabel," he said, smiling tenderly upon her, "do you remember, in the first days of our marriage, you told me you did not yet love me, but that the love would come. I think this is it."

Her face flushed nearly to tears at the words; a bright, glowing, all too conscious flush. Mr. Carlyle mistook its source, and caught her to his heart.

Lady Isabel had returned home to bodily health, to the delight of meeting her children, to the glad sensation of security. But, as the days went on, a miserable feeling of apathy stole over her; a feeling as if all whom she had loved in the world had died, leaving her living and alone.

She did not encourage these reflections; knowing what you do know of her, you may be sure of that, but they thrust themselves continually forward. The form of Francis Levison was ever present to her; not a minute of the day but it gave the coloring to her thoughts, and at night it made the subject of her dreams. Oh, those dreams! they were painful to wake from; painful from the contrasts they presented to reality; and equally painful to her conscience, in its strife after what was right.

Mr. Carlyle mounted his horse one morning and rode over to Levison Park. He asked for Sir Peter, but was shown into the presence of Lady Levison—a young and pretty woman, dressed showily. She inquired his business.

"My business, madam, is with Sir Peter."

"But Sir Peter is not well enough to attend to business; it upsets him—worries him."

"Nevertheless, I am here by his own appointment Twelve o'clock, he mentioned; and the hour has barely struck."

Lady Levison bit her lip and bowed coldly; and at that moment a servant appeared to conduct Mr. Carlyle to Sir Peter. The matter which had taken Mr. Carlyle thither was entered upon immediately—Francis Levison, his debts, and his gracelessness. Sir Peter, an old gentleman in a velvet skull-cap, particularly enlarged upon the latter.

"I'd pay his debts to-day and set him upon his legs again, but that I know should have to do the same thing over and over to the end of the chapter—as I have done it repeatedly hitherto," cried Sir Peter. "His grandfather was my only brother, his father my dutiful and beloved nephew; but he is just as bad as they were estimable. He is a worthless fellow and nothing else, Mr. Carlyle."

"His tale drew forth my compassion, and I promised I would see you and speak for him," returned Mr. Carlyle. "Of Captain Levison's personal virtues or vices, I know nothing."

"And the less you know the better," growled Sir Peter. "I suppose he wants me to clear him and start him afresh."

"Something of that sort, I conclude."

"But how is it to be done? I am at home, and he is over there. His affairs are in a state of confusion, and nobody can come to the bottom of them without an explanation from him. Some liabilities, for which I have furnished the money, the creditors swear have not been liquidated. He must come over if he wants anything done."

"Where is he to come to? He must be in England sub rosâ."

"He can't be here," hastily rejoined Sir Peter. "Lady Levison would not have him for a day."

"He might be at East Lynne," good-naturedly observed Mr. Carlyle. "Nobody would think of looking for him there. I think it is a pity that you should not meet, if you do feel inclined to help him."

"You are a deal more considerate to him than he deserves, Mr. Carlyle. May I ask if you intend to act for him in a professional capacity?"

"I do not."

A few more words, and it was decided that Captain Levison should be immediately sent for. As Mr. Carlyle left Sir Peter's presence, he encountered Lady Levison.

"I can scarcely be ignorant that your conference with my husband has reference to his grandnephew," she observed.

"It has," replied Mr. Carlyle.

"I have a very bad opinion of him, Mr. Carlyle; at the same time I do not wish you to carry away a wrong impression of me. Francis Levison is my husband's nephew, his presumptive heir; it may, therefore, appear strange that I set my face against him. Two or three years ago, previous to my marriage with Sir Peter, in fact before I knew Sir Peter, I was brought into contact with Francis Levison. He got acquainted with some friends of mine, and at their house I met him. He behaved shamefully ill; he repaid their hospitality with gross ingratitude; other details and facts regarding his conduct, also became known to me. Altogether, I believe him to be a base and despicable man, both by nature and by inclination, and that he will remain such to the end of time."

"I know very little indeed of him," observed Mr. Carlyle. "May I inquire the nature of his ill conduct in that instance?"

"He ruined them—he ruined them, Mr. Carlyle. They were simple, unsuspicious country people, understanding neither fraud nor vice, nor the ways of an evil world. Francis Levison got them to put their names to bills, 'as a matter of form, to accommodate him for a month or so,' he stated, and so they believed. They were not wealthy; they lived upon their own small estate, with none too much of superfluous money to spare, and when the time came for them to pay—as come it did—it brought ruin, and they had to leave their home. He deliberately did it—I am certain that Francis Levison deliberately did it, knowing what would be the end. And I could tell you of other things. Sir Peter may have informed you that I object to receive him here. I do. My objection is to the man—to his character; not owing, as I hear it has been said, to any jealous, paltry feeling touching his being the heir. I must lose my own self-respect before I admit Francis Levison to my house an inmate. Sir Peter may assist him and welcome—may pay his debts, and get him out of his scrapes as often as he pleases, but I will not have him here."

"Sir Peter said you declined to receive him. But it is necessary that he should come to England, if his affairs are to be set straight, and also that he should see Sir Peter."

"Come to England!" interrupted Lady Levison. "How can he come to England under present circumstances, unless, indeed, he comes en cachette."

"En cachette, of course," replied Mr. Carlyle. "There is no other way. I have offered to let him stay at East Lynne. He is, you may be aware, a sort of connection of Lady Isabel."

"Take care he does not repay your hospitality with ingratitude," warmly returned Lady Levison. "It would only be in accordance with his practice."

Mr. Carlyle laughed.

"I do not see what harm he could do me, allowing that he had the inclination. He would not scare my clients from me or beat my children, and I can take care of my pocket. A few days, no doubt, will be the extent of his sojourn."

Lady Levison smiled too, and shook hands with Mr. Carlyle.

"In your house, perhaps, there may be no field for his vagaries, but rely upon it, where there is one he is sure to be at some mischief or other."

This visit of Mr. Carlyle's to Levison Park took place on a Friday morning, and on his return to his office he dispatched an account of it to Captain Levison at Boulogne, telling him he had better come over. But now Mr. Carlyle, like many another man whose mind has its share of work, was sometimes forgetful of trifles, and it entirely slipped his memory to mention the expected arrival at home. The following evening, Saturday, he and Lady Isabel were dining in the neighborhood, when the conversation turned upon the Davies and their embarrassments. The association of ideas led Mr. Carlyle's thoughts to Boulogne, to Captain Levison and his embarrassments, and it immediately occurred to him that he had not told his wife of the anticipated visit. He kept it in his mind then, and spoke as soon as they were in the chariot returning home.

"Isabel," began he, "I suppose we have always rooms ready for visitors, because I am expecting one."

"Oh, yes; or if not they are soon made ready."

"Ay, but to-morrow's Sunday, and I have no doubt that's the day he will take advantage of to come. I am sorry I forgot to mention it yesterday."

"Who is coming, then?"

"Captain Levison."

"Who?" repeated Lady Isabel, in a sharp tone of consternation.

"Captain Levison. Sir Peter consents to see him, with a view to the settlement of his liabilities, but Lady Levison declines to receive him at the Park. So I offered to give him house-room at East Lynne for a few days."

There is an old saying, the heart leaping into the mouth; and Lady Isabel's leaped into hers. She grew dizzy at the words—her senses seemed momentarily to desert her. Her first sensation was as if the dull earth had opened and shown her a way into Paradise: her second, a lively consciousness that Francis Levison ought not to be suffered to come again into companionship with her. Mr. Carlyle continued to converse of the man's embarrassments, of his own interview with Sir Peter, of Lady Levison; but Isabel was as one who heard not. She was debating the question, how could she prevent his coming?

"Archibald," she presently said, "I do not wish Francis Levison to stay at East Lynne."

"It will be only for a few days—perhaps but a day or two. Sir Peter is in the humor to discharge the claims, and the moment his resolve is known, the ex-captain can walk on her majesty's dominions an unmolested man, free to go where he will."

"That may be," interrupted Lady Isabel, in an accent of impatience; "but why should he come to our house?"

"I proposed it myself. I had no idea you would dislike his coming. Why should you?"

"I don't like Francis Levison," she murmured. "That is, I don't care to have him at East Lynne."

"My dear, I fear there is no help for it now; he is most likely on his road, and will arrive to-morrow. I cannot turn him out again after my own voluntary invitation. Had I known it would be disagreeable to you, I would not have proposed it."

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed, all the words that caught her ear. "Is he coming to-morrow?"

"Being Sunday, a free day, he will be sure to take advantage of it. What has he done, that you should object to his coming? You did not say in Boulogne that you disliked him."

"He has done nothing," was her faltering answer, feeling that her grounds of opposition must melt under her one by one.

"Lady Levison appears to possess a very ill opinion of him," resumed Mr. Carlyle. "She says she knew him in years gone by. She mentioned one or two things which, if true, must be bad enough. But possibly she may be prejudiced."

"She is prejudiced," said Isabel. "At least so Francis Levison told me at Boulogne. There appeared to be no love lost between them."

"At any rate, his ill-doings or well-doings cannot affect us for the short period he is likely to remain. You have taken a prejudice against him also, I suppose, Isabel."

She suffered Mr. Carlyle to remain in the belief, and sat with clasped hands and a despairing spirit, feeling that fate was against her.

How could she accomplish her task of forgetting this man, if he was thus to be thrown into her home and her companionship? Suddenly she turned to her husband, and laid her cheek upon his shoulder.

He thought she was tired. He passed his arm round her waist, drew her face to a more comfortable position, and bent his own lovingly upon it. It came into her mind, as she lay there, to tell him a portion of the truth, like it had done once before. It was a strong arm of shelter, that round her—a powerful pillar of protection, him upon whom she leaned: why did she not confide herself to him as trustingly as a little child? Simply because her courage failed. Once, twice, the opening words were upon her lips, but come forth they did not; and then the carriage stopped at East Lynne, and the opportunity was over. Oh! how many a time in her after years did Lady Isabel recall that midnight drive with her husband, and wish, in her vain repentance, that she had opened his eyes to that dangerous man.

On Sunday, Captain Levison arrived at East Lynne.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 31.)

Belles Demoiselles Plantation.

The original grantee was Count ——, assume the name to be De Charlen; the old Creoles never forgive a public mention. He was the French king's commissary. One day, called to France to explain the lucky accident of the commissariat having burned down with his account-books inside, he left his wife, a Choctaw comptesse, behind.

Arrived at court, his excuses were accepted, and that tract granted him where afterward stood Belles Demoiselles Plantation. A man cannot remember everything! In a fit of forgetfulness he married a French gentlewoman, rich and beautiful, and "brought her out." However, "All's well that ends well;" a famine had been in the colony, and the Choctaw comptesse had starved, leaving nought but a half-caste orphan family lurking on the edge of the settlement, bearing our French gentlewoman's own new name, and being mentioned in monsieur's will.

And the new comptesse—she farried but a twelvemonth, left monsieur a lovely son, and departed, led out of this vain world by the swamp-fever.

From this son sprang the proud Creole family of De Charlen. It rose straight up, up, up, generation after generation, tall, branchless, slender, palm-like; and finally, in the time of which I am to tell, flowered with all the rare beauty of a century-plant, in Artemise, Innocente, Felicité, the twins Marie and Martha, Leontine and little Septime: the seven beautiful daughters for whom their home had been fitly named Belles Demoiselles.

The count's grant had once been a long point, round which the Mississippi used to whirl, and seethe, and foam, that it was horrid to behold. Big whirlpools would open and wheel about in the savage eddies under the low bank, and close up again, and others open, and spin, and disappear. Great circles of muddy surface would boil up from hundreds of feet below, and gloss over, and seem to float away—sink, come back again under water, and with only a soft hiss surge up again, and again drift off and vanish. Every few minutes the loamy bank would tip down a great load of earth upon its besieger, and fall back a foot—sometimes a yard—and the writhing river would press after, until at last the Point was quite swallowed up, and the great river glided by in a majestic curve, and asked no more; the bank stood fast, the "caving" became a forgotten misfortune, and the diminished grant was a long, sweeping, willowy bend, rustling with miles of sugar-cane.

Coming up the Mississippi in the sailing craft of those early days, about the time one first could descry the white spires of the old St. Louis Cathedral, you would be pretty sure to spy, just over to your right under the levee, Belles Demoiselles Mansion, with its broad verandah and red painted cypress roof, peering over the embankment, like a bird in the nest, half hid by the avenue of willows which one of the departed De Charlens—he that married a Marot—had planted on the levee's crown.

The house stood unusually near the river, facing eastward, and standing four-square, with an immense verandah about its sides, and a flight of steps in front spreading broadly downward, as we open arms to a child. From the verandah nine miles of river were seen; and in their compass, near at hand, the shady garden full of rare and beautiful flowers; farther away broad fields of cane and rice, and the distant quarters of the slaves, and on the horizon everywhere a dark belt of cypress forest.

The master was old Colonel De Charlen—Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charlen-Marot, and "Colonel" by the grace of the first American governor. Monsieur—he would not speak to any one who called him "Colonel"—was a hoary-headed patriarch. His step was firm, his form erect, his intellect strong and clear, his countenance classic, serene, dignified, commanding, his manners courtly, his voice musical—fascinating. He had had his vices—all his life; but had borne them, as his race do, with a serenity of conscience and a cleanness of mouth that left no outward blemish on the surface of the gentleman. He had gambled in Royal street, drank hard in Orleans street, run his adversary through in the dueling ground at Slaughter-house Point, and danced and quarrelled at the St. Philippe street-theatre quadroon balls. Even now, with all his courtesy and bounty, and a hospitality which seemed to be entertaining angels, he was bitter-proud and penurious, and deep down in his hard-finished heart loved nothing but himself, his name, and his motherless children. But these!—their ravishing beauty was all but excuse enough for the unbounded idolatry of their father. Against these seven goddesses he never rebelled. Had they even required him to defraud old De Carlos—

I can hardly say.

Old De Carlos was his extremely distant relative on the Choctaw side. With this single exception, the narrow, thread-like line of descent from the Indian wife, diminished to a mere strand by injudicious alliances, and deaths in the gutters of old New Orleans, was extinct. The name, by Spanish contact, had become De Carlos; but this one surviving bearer of it was known to all, and known only, as Ingin Charlie.

One thing I never knew a Creole to do. He will not utterly go back on the ties of blood, no matter what sort of knots those ties may be. For one reason, he is never ashamed of his or his father's sins; and for another—he will tell you—he is "all heart!"

So the different heirs of the De Charlen estate had always strictly regarded the rights and interests of the De Carloses, especially their ownership of a block of dilapidated bulldogs in a part of the city, which had once been very poor property, but was beginning to be valuable. This block had much more than maintained the last De Carlos through a long and lazy lifetime, and, as his household consisted only of himself and an aged and crippled negress, the inference was irresistible that he "had money." Old Charlie, though by alias an "Injin," was plainly a dark white man, about as old as Colonel De Charlen, sunk in the bliss of deep ignorance, shrewd, deaf, and, by repute at least, unmerciful.

The colonel and he always conversed in English. This rare accomplishment, which the former had learned from his Scotch wife—the latter from up-river traders—they found an admirable medium of communication, answering, better than French could, a similar purpose to that of the stick which we fasten to the bit of one horse and breast-gear of another, whereby each keeps his distance. Once in a while, too, by way of jest, English found its way among the ladies of Belles Demoiselles, always signifying that their sire was about to have business with old Charlie.

Now a long standing wish to buy out Charlie troubled the colonel. He had no desire to oust him unfairly; he was proud of being always fair; yet he did long to engross the whole estate under one title. Out of his luxurious idleness he had conceived this desire, and thought little of so slight an obstacle as being already somewhat in debt to old Charlie for money borrowed, and for which Belles Demoiselles was, of course, good, ten times over. Lots, buildings, rents, all, might as well be his, he thought, to give, keep, or destroy. "Had he but the old man's heritage. Ah! he might bring that into existence which his belles demoiselles had been begging for, 'since many years;' a home—and such a home—in the gay city. Here he should tear down this row of cottages, and make his garden wall; there that long rope-walk should give place to vine covered arbors; the bakery yonder should make way for a costly conservatory; that wine warehouse should come down, and the mansion go up. It should be the finest in the State. Men should never pass it, but they should say—'the palace of the De Charlens;' a family of grand descent, a people of elegance and bounty, a line as old as France, a fine old man, and seven daughters as beautiful as happy; whoever dare attempt to marry there must leave his own name behind him!"

"The house should be of stones fitly set, brought down in ships from the land of 'les Yankees,' and it should have an airy belvedere, with a gilded image tip-toeing and shining on its peak, and from it you should see, far across the gleaming folds of the river, the red roof of Belles Demoiselles, the country seat. At the big stone gate there should be a porter's lodge, and it should be a privilege even to see the ground."

Truly they were a family fine enough, and fancy-free enough to have fine wishes, yet happy enough where they were, to have had no wish but to live there always.

To those, who, by whatever fortune, wandered into the garden of Belles Demoiselles some summer afternoon as the sky was reddening toward evening, it was lovely to see the family gathered out upon the tiled pavement at the foot of the broad front steps, gaily chatting and jesting, with that ripple of laughter that comes so pleasingly from a bevy of girls. The father would be found seated in their midst, the centre of attention and compliment, witness, arbiter, umpire, critic, by his beautiful children's unanimous appointment, but the single vassal, too, of seven absolute sovereigns.

Now they would draw their chairs near together in eager discussion of some new step in the dance, or the adjustment of some rich adornment. Now they would start about him with excited comments to see the eldest fix a bunch of violets in his buttonhole. Now the twins would move down a walk after some unusual flower, and be greeted on their return with the high-pitched notes of delighted feminine surprise.

As evening came on they would draw more quietly about their paternal centre. Often their chairs were forsaken, and they grouped themselves on the lower steps, one above another, and surrendered themselves to the tender influences of the approaching night. At such an hour the passer on the river, already attracted by the dark figures of the broad-roofed mansion, and its woody garden standing against the glowing sunset, would hear the voices of the hidden group rise from the spot in the soft harmonies of an evening song; swelling clearer and clearer as the thrill of music warmed them into feeling, and presently joined by the deeper tones of the father's voice; then, as

the daylight passed quite away, all would be still, and he would know that the beautiful home had gathered its nestlings under its wings.

And yet, for mere vagary, it pleased them not to be pleased.

"Arti!" called one sister to another in the broad hall, one morning—mock amazement in her distended eyes—"something is goin' to took place!"

"Comm-e-n-t?"—long drawn perplexity.

"Papa is goin' to town!"

The news passed up-stairs.

"Inno!"—one to another meeting in a doorway—"something is goin' to took place!"

"Qu'est-ce que c'est!"—vain attempt at gruffness.

"Papa is goin' to town!"

The unusual tidings were true. It was afternoon of the same day that the colonel tossed his horse's bridle to his groom, and stepped up to old Charlie, who was sitting on his bench under a China-tree, his head, as was his fashion, bound in a Madras handkerchief. The "old man" was plainly under the effect of spirits, and smiled a deferential salutation without trusting himself to his feet.

"Eh, well Charlie!"—the colonel raised his voice to suit his kinsman's deafness—"how is those times with my friend Charlie?"

"Eh?" said Charlie, distractedly.

"Is that goin' well with my friend Charlie?"

"In the house—call her"—making a pretence of rising.

"Non, non! I don't want"—the speaker paused to breathe—"ow is collection?"

"Oh, said Charlie, "every day he make me more poorer!"

"What do you bask for it?" asked the planter indifferently, designating the house by a wave of his whip.

"Ask for w'at?" said Injin Charlie.

"De house! What you ask for it?"

"I don't believe," said Charlie.

"What you would take for it!" cried the planter.

"Wait for w'at?"

"What you would take for the whole block?"

"I don't want to sell him!"

"I'll give you ten thousand dollah for it."

"Ten t'ousand dollah for dis house? Oh, no, that is no price. He is blame good old house—that old house." (Old Charlie and the colonel never swore in presence of each other.) "Forty years that old house didn't had to be paint! I easy can get fifty t'ousand dollah for that old house."

"Fifty thousand picayunes; yes," said the colonel.

"She's a good house. Can make plenty money," pursued the deaf man.

"That's what make you so rich, eh, Charlie?"

"Non, I don't make nothing. Too blame clever, me, dat's de troub'. She's a good house—make money fast like a steamboat—make a barrel full in a week! Me, I lose money all the days. Too blame clever."

"Charlie!"

"Eh?"

"Tell me what you'll take?"

"Make? I don't make nothing. Too blame clever."

"What will you take?"

"Oh! I got enough already—half drunk now."

"What you will take for the 'ouse!"

"You want to buy her?"

"I don't know"—(shrug)—"may-be—if you sell it cheap."

"She's a bully old house."

There was a long silence. By and by old Charlie commenced—

"Old Injin Charlie is a low-down dog."

"C'est vrai, oui!" retorted the colonel in an undertone.

"He's got Injin blood in him."

The colonel nodded assent.

"But he's got some blame good blood, too, ain't it?"

The colonel nodded impatiently.

"Bien! Old Charlie's Injin blood says, 'sell the house, Charlie, you blame old fool!' Mais, old Charlie's good blood says, 'Charlie! if you sell that old house, Charlie, you low-down old dog, Charlie, what de Compte De Charleu make for you grace-gran'-muzzer, de dev' can eat you, Charlie, I don't care.'"

"But you'll sell it anyhow, won't you, old man?"

"No!" And the no rumbled off in muttered oaths like thunder out on the gulf. The incensed old colonel wheeled and started off.

"Curl!" (Colonel) said Charlie, standing up unsteadily.

The planter turned with an inquiring frown.

"I'll trade with you!" said Charlie.

The Colonel was tempted. "'Ow'l you trade?" he asked.

"My house for yours!"

The old colonel turned pale with anger. He walked very quickly back, and came close up to his kinsman.

"Charlie!" he said.

"Injin Charlie," with a tipsy nod.

But by this time self control was returning. "Sell Belles Demoiselles to you?" he said in a high key, and then laughed "Ho, ho, ho!" and rode away.

A cloud, but not a dark one, overshadowed the spirits of Belles Demoiselles' plantation. The old master, whose beaming presence had always made him a shining datum, spinning and sparkling within the bright circle of his daughters, fell into musing fits, started out of frowning reveries, walked often by himself, and heard business from his overseer fretfully.

No wonder. The daughters knew his closeness in trade, and attributed to it his failure to negotiate for the Old Charlie buildings—so to call them. They began to depreciate Belles Demoiselles. If a north wind blew, it was too cold to ride. If a shower had fallen, it was too muddy to drive. In the morning the garden was wet. In the evening the grasshopper was a burden. Ennui was turned into capital; every headache was interpreted a premonition of ague; and when the native exuberance of a flock of ladies without a want or a care burst out in laughter in the father's face, they spread their French eyes, rolled up their little hands, and with rigid wrists and mock vehemence vowed and vowed again that they only laughed at their misery, and should pine to death unless they could move to the sweet city. "Oh, the theatre! Oh, Orleans street! Oh, the masquerade! the Place d'Armes! the ball!" and they would call upon Heaven with French irreverence, and fall into each other's arms, whirl down the hall singing a waltz, and with a grand collision and fall, and, their eyes streaming merriment, lay the blame on the slippery floor, that would some day be the death of the whole seven.

Three times more the fond father, thus goaded, managed, by accident—business accident—to see old Charlie and increase his offer; but in vain. He finally went to him formally.

"Eh!" said the deaf and distant relative. "For what you want him, eh? Why you don't stay where you halways be 'appy? This is a blame old rat-hole—good for old Injin Charlie—that's all. Why you don't stay where you be halways 'appy? Why you don't buy somewheres else?"

"That's none of your business," snapped the planter.

Truth was, his reasons were unsatisfactory even to himself.

A sullen silence followed. Then Charlie spoke:

"Well, now look here; I sell you old Charlie's house."

"Bien! and the whole block," said the colonel.

"Hold on," said Charlie. "I sell you de 'ouse and de block. Den I go and git drunk, and go to sleep; de dev' comes along and says, 'Charlie! old Charlie, you blame low-down old dog, wake up! What you doin' here? Where's de 'ouse what Monsieur le Compte give your grace-gran-muzzer? Don't you see dat fine gentyman, De Charleu, done gone and tore him down and make him over new, you blame old fool, Charlie, you low-down old Injin dog!'"

"I'll give you forty thousand dollars," said the colonel.

"For de 'ouse?"

"For all."

The deaf man shook his head.

"Forty-five!" said the colonel.

"What a lie? For what you tell me 'what a lie?' I don't tell you no lie."

"Non, non! I give you forty-five!" shouted the colonel.

Charlie shook his head again.

"Fifty!"

He shook it again.

The figures rose and rose to—

"Seventy-five!"

The answer was an invitation to go away and let the owner alone, as he was, in certain specified respects, the vilest of living creatures, and no company for a fine gentyman.

The "fine gentyman" longed to blaspheme—but before old Charlie!—in the name of pride, how could he? He mounted and started away.

"Tell you what I'll make wid you," said Charlie.

The other, guessing aright, turned back without dismounting, smiling.

"How much Belles Demoiselles hoes me now?" asked the deaf one.

"One hundred and eighty thousand dollars," said the colonel, firmly.

"Yass," said Charlie. "I don't want Belles Demoiselles."

The old colonel's quiet laugh intimated it made no difference either way.

"But me," continued Charlie, "me—I'm got le Compte De Charleu's blood in me, any 'ow—a litt' bit, any 'ow, ain't it?"

The colonel nodded that it was.

"Bien! If I go out of dis place and don't go to Belles Demoiselles, de peoples will say—day will say, 'Old Charlie be been all doze time tell a blame lie! He ain't no kin to his old grace-gran-muzzer, not a blame bit! He don't got nary drop of De Charleu blood to save his blame low-down old Injin soul! No, sare! What I want wid money, den? No, sare! My place for yours!"

He turned to go into the house, just too soon to see the colonel make an ugly whisk at him with his riding-whip. Then the colonel, too, moved off.

Two or three times over, as he ambled homeward, laughter broke through his annoyance, as he recalled Old Charley's family pride and the presumption of his offer. Yet each time he could but think better of—not the offer to swap, but the preposterous ancestral loyalty. It was so much better than he could have expected from his "low-down" relative, and not unlike his own whim withal—the proposition which went with it was forgiven.

This last defeat bore so harshly on the master of Belles Demoiselles, that the daughters, reading chagrin in his face, began to repent. They loved their father as daughters can, and when they saw their pretended dejection harassing him seriously they restrained their complaints, displayed more than ordinary tenderness, and heroically and ostentatiously concluded there was no place like Belles Demoiselles. But the new mood touched him more than the old, and only refined his discontent. Here was a man, rich without the care of riches, free from any real trouble, happiness as native to his house as perfume to his garden, deliberately, as it were with premeditated malice, taking joy by the shoulder and bidding her be gone to town, whither he might easily have followed, only that the very same ancestral nonsense that kept Injin Charlie from selling the old place for twice its value prevented him from choosing any other spot for a city home.

Heaven sometimes pities such rich men and sends them trouble.

By and by the charm of nature and the merry hearts around prevailed; the fit of exalted sulks passed off, and after awhile the year flared up at Christmas, flickered and went out.

New Year came and passed; the beautiful garden of Belles Demoiselles put on its spring attire; the seven fair sisters moved from rose to rose; the cloud of discontent had warmed into invisible vapor in the rich sunlight of family affection, and on the common memory the only scar of last year's wound was old Charlie's sheer impertinence in crossing the caprice of the De Charleus. The cup of gladness seemed to fill with the filling of the river.

How high it was! Its tremendous current rolled and tumbled and spun along, hustling the long funeral flotillas of drift—and how near shore it came! Men were out day and night, watching the levee. Even the old colonel took part, and grew light-hearted with occupation and excitement, as every minute the river threw a white arm over the levee's top, as though it would vault over. But all held fast, and, as the summer drifted in, the water sunk down into its banks and looked quite incapable of harm.

On a summer afternoon of uncommon mildness, old Colonel Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot, being in a mood for revery, slipped the custody of his feminine rulers and sought the crown of the levee, where it was his wont to promenade. Presently he sat upon a stone bench—a favorite seat. Before him lay his broad-spread fields; near by, his lordly mansion; and being still—perhaps by female contact—somewhat sentimental, he fell to musing on his past. It was hardly worthy to be proud of. All its morning was reddened with mad frolic, and far toward the meridian it was marred with elegant rioting. Pride had kept him well-nigh useless, and despised the honors won by valor; gaming had dimmed prosperity; death had taken his heavenly wife; voluptuous ease had mortgaged his lands; and yet his house still stood, his sweet-smelling fields were still fruitful, his name was fame enough; and yonder and yonder, among the trees and flowers, like angels walking in Eden, were the seven goddesses of his only worship.

Just then a slight sound behind him brought him to his feet. He cast his eyes anxiously to the outer edge of the little strip of bank between the levee's base and the river. There was nothing visible. He paused, with his ear toward the water, his face full of frightened expectation. Ha! There came a single plashing sound, like some great beast slipping into the river, and little waves in a wide semi-circle came out from under the bank and spread over the water!

"My God!"

He plunged down the levee and bounded through the low weeds to the edge of the bank. It was sheer, and the water about four feet below. He did not stand quite on the edge, but fell upon his knees a couple of yards away, wringing his hands, moaning and weeping, and staring through his watery eyes at a fine, long crevice just discernible under the matted grass, and curving outward on either hand toward the river.

"My God!" he sobbed aloud; "My God!" And even while he called, his God answered: the tough Bermuda grass stretched and snapped, the crevice slowly became a gape, and softly, gradually, with no sound but the closing of the water at last, a ton or more of earth settled into the boiling eddy and disappeared.

At the same instant a pulse of the breeze brought from the garden behind, the joyous, thoughtless laughter of the fair mistresses of Belles Demoiselles.

The old colonel sprang up and clambered over the levee. Then forcing himself to a more composed movement, he hastened into the house and ordered his horse.

"Tell my children to make merry while I am gone," he left word. "I shall be back to-night;" and the big horse's hoofs clattered down a by-road leading to the city.

"Charlie," said the planter, riding up to a window, from which the old man's night-cap was thrust out, "What you say Charlie—my house for yours, eh, Charlie, what you say?"

"Ello!" said Charlie; "from where you come from dis time of to-night?"

"I come from the Exchange." (A small fraction of the truth.)

"What you want?" said matter-of-fact Charlie.

"I come to trade."

The low-down relative drew the worsted off his ears. "Oh, yass," he said, with an uncertain air.

"Well, old man Charley, what you say; my house for yours—like you said—eh, Charlie?"

"I dunno," said Charlie, "it's nearly mine now. Why you don't stay dare yourse'f?"

"Because I don't want!" said the colonel, savagely; "is dat reason enough for you? you better take me in de notion, old man, I tell you—yes!"

Charlie never winced; but how his answer delighted the colonel! quoth Charlie—

"I don't care—I take him!—mais, possession give right off."

"Not the whole plantation, Charlie; only—"

"I don't care," said Charlie, "we easy can fix dat. Mais, what for you don't want to keep him? I don't want him. You better keep him."

"Don't you try to make no fool of me, old man," cried the planter.

"Oh, no!" said the other. "Oh, no! but you make a fool of yourself, ain't it?"

The dumbfounded colonel stared; Charlie went on.

"Yass! Belles Demoiselles is more wort' dan tree block like dis one. I pass by dare since two weeks. Oh, pritty Belles Demoiselles! de cane was wave in de wind, de garden smell like a bouquet, de whitecap was jump up and down on de river; seven belles demoiselles was ridin' on horses. 'Pritty, pritty, pritty! says old Charlie; ah! monsieur le père, 'ow 'appy, 'appy, 'appy!'"

"Yass!" he continued—the colonel still staring—"le Compte De Charleu have two familie. One was low-down Choctaw, one was high-up noblesse. He give the low-down Choctaw dis old rat-hole; he give Belles Demoiselles to your gran-fozzer; and now you don't be satisfait. What I'll do wid Belles Demoiselles? She'll break me in two years, yass. And what you'll do wid old Charlie's house, eh? You'll tear her down and make you'se'f a blame old fool. I rather wouldn't trade!"

The planter caught a big breath-full of anger, but Charlie went straight on.

"I rather wouldn't, mais I will do it for you;—just de same, like Monsieur le Compte would say, 'Charlie, you old fool, I want to shange houses wid you.'"

So long as the colonel suspected irony he was angry, but as Charlie seemed after all to be certainly in earnest, he began to feel conscience-stricken. He was by no means a tender man, but his lately-discovered misfortune had unhinged him, and this strange undeserved, disinterested family fealty on the part of Charlie touched his heart. And should he still try to lead him into the pitfall he had dug? He hesitated; no, he would show him the place by broad daylight, and if he chose to overlook the "caving bank," it would be his own fault; a trade's a trade.

"Come," said the planter, "come at my house to-night; to-morrow we look at the place before breakfast, and finish the trade."

"For what?" said Charlie.

"Oh, because I got to come in town in the morning."

"I don't want;" said Charlie. "How I'm goin' to come dere?"

"I git you a horse at the liberty stable."

"Well—anyhow—I don't care—I'll go." And they went.

When they had ridden a long time, and were on the road darkened by hedges of Cherokee rose, the colonel called behind him to the "low-down" scion,

"Keep the road, old man."

"Eh?"

"Keep the road."

"Oh, yes; all right; I keep my word; we don't goin' to play no tricks, eh?"

But the colonel seemed not to hear. His ungenerous design was beginning to be hateful to him. Not only old Charlie's unprovoked goodness was prevailing; the eulogy on Belles Demoiselles had stirred the depths of an intense love for his beautiful home. True if he held to it, the caving of the bank, at its present fearful speed, would let the house into the river within three months; but were it not better to lose it so, than sell his birthright? Again—coming back to the first thought—to betray his own blood! It was only Injin Charley; but had not the De Charleu blood just spoken out in him? Unconsciously he groaned.

After a time they struck a path approaching the plantation in the rear, and a little after, passing from behind a clump of live-oaks, they came in sight of the villa. It looked so like a gem, shining through its dark grove, so like a great glow-worm in the dense foliage, so significant of luxury and gayety, that the poor master, from an overflowing heart, groaned again.

"What?" asked Charlie.

The colonel only drew his rein, and, dismounting mechanically, contemplated the sight before him. The high, arched doors and windows were thrown wide to the summer air; from every opening the bright light of numerous candelabra darted out upon the sparkling foliage of magnolia and bay, and here and there in the spacious verandahs, a colored lantern swayed in the gentle breeze. A sound of revel fell on the ear, the music of harps; and across one window, brighter than the rest, flitted, once or twice, the shadows of dancers. But oh! the shadows flitting across the heart of the fair mansion's master!

"Old Charlie," said he, gazing fondly at his house, "you and me is both old, eh?"

"Yass," said the stolid Charlie.

"And we have both been bad enough in our time, eh, Charlie?"

Charlie surprised at the tender tone, repeated, "Yass."

"And you and me is mighty close?"

"Blame close, yass."

"But you never know me to cheat, old man!"

"No," impassively.

"And do you think I would cheat you now?"

"I dunno," said Charlie. "I don't believe."

"Well, o'd man—old man," his voice began to quiver—"I sha'n't cheat you now. My God!—old man, I tell you—you better not make the trade!"

"Because for what?" asked Charlie in plain anger; but both looked quickly toward the house! The colonel tossed his hands wildly in the air, rushed forward a step or two, and giving one fearful scream of agony and fright, fell forward on his face in the path. Old Charlie stood transfixed with horror. Belles Demoiselles, the realm of maiden beauty, the home of merriment, the house of dancing, all in the tremor and glow of pleasure, suddenly sunk, with one short, wild wail of terror—sunk, sunk, down, down, down, into the merciless, unfathomable flood of the Mississippi.

Twelve long months were midnight to the mind of the childless father; when they were only half gone, he took his bed; and every day, and every night, old Charlie, the "low-down," the "fool," watched him tenderly, tended him lovingly, for the sake of his name, his misfortunes and his broken heart. No woman's step crossed the floor of the sick chamber, whose western dormer-windows overpeered the dingy architecture of old Charlie's block; Charlie and a skilled physician, the one all interest, the other all gentleness, hope and patience—these only entered by the door; but by the window came in a sweet-scented evergreen vine, transplanted from the caving bank of Belles Demoiselles. It caught the rays of sunset in its flowery net and let them softly in upon the sick man's bed; gathered the glancing beams of the moon at midnight, and often wakened the sleeper to look, with his mindless eyes, upon their pretty silver fragments strewn upon the floor.

By and by there seemed—there was—a twinkling dawn of returning reason. Slowly, peacefully, with an increase unseen from day to day, the light of reason came into the eyes, and speech became coherent; but withal there came a failing of the wrecked body, and the doctor said that monsieur was both better and worse.

One evening as Charlie sat by the vine-clad window with his fireless pipe in his hand, the old colonel's eyes fell full upon his own, and rested there.

"Charl—," he said, with an effort, and his delighted nurse hastened to the bedside and bowed his best ear. There was an unsuccessful effort or two, and then he whispered, smiling with sweet sadness—

"We didn't trade."

The truth, in this case, was a secondary matter to Charlie; the main point was to give a pleasing answer. So he nodded his head decidedly, as who should say—"Oh, yes, we did, it was a bona fide swap!" but when he saw the smile vanish, he tried the other expedient and shook his head with still more vigor, to signify that they had not so much as approached a bargain; and the smile returned.

Charlie wanted to see the vine recognized. He stepped backward to the window with a broad smile, shook the foliage, nodded and looked smart.

"I know," said the colonel, with beaming eyes, "—many weeks."

The next day—

"Charl—"

The best ear went down.

"Send for a priest."

The priest came, and was alone with him a whole afternoon. When he left, the patient was very haggard and exhausted, but smiled and would not suffer the crucifix to be removed from his breast.

One more morning came. Just before dawn Charlie, lying on a pallet in the room, thought he was called, and came to the bedside.

"Old man," whispered the failing invalid, "is it caving yet?"

Charlie nodded.

"It won't pay you out."

"Oh, dat makes not'ing," said Charlie. Two big tears rolled down his brown face.

"Dat makes not 'in."

The colonel whispered once more—

"Mes belles demoiselles!—in paradise—in the garden—I shall be with them at sunrise;" and so it was.—*Scribner's Monthly.*

Anecdotes of Horne Tooke.

A good joke is told of Horne Tooke, whom the Tories in the House of Commons thought to crush, by imposing upon him the humiliating task of begging the House's pardon on his knees. Tooke went on his knees, begged pardon for the offensive expression he had used, but, on rising, he knocked the dust off his knees, and exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by the whole House, "It's a dirty house, after all!" Roars of laughter followed this exclamation, and the Tories saw clearly enough that they had failed in the object which they had in view.

On the evening of Tooke's arrival at Oxford he joined a party of old school-fellows in a caronse at one of the taverns. Sundry bowls of "bishop" and egg flip having been discussed, songs amatory and bacchanalian were sung with full choruses, and altogether the jocularity began to pass the limits of becoming mirth, when the Proctor made his appearance and, advancing to the table at which the "Freshman"—fresh in every sense of the word—was presiding, put the usual question, "Pray, sir, are you a member of this university?" "No sir," replied Tooke, rising and bowing respectfully, "pray, sir, are you?" A little disconcerted at the extreme gravity of the other, the Proctor held out his ample sleeve and said, "You see this, sir?" "Ah," returned Tooke, having examined the fabric with great earnestness for a few seconds, "yes, I perceive—Manchester velvet. And may I take the liberty, sir, of inquiring how much you might have paid a yard for the article?" The quiet imperturbability of manner with which this was uttered was more than the reverend gentleman could stand, and, muttering something about supposing it was a mistake, he effected a retreat amidst shouts of laughter from Tooke's companions.

☞ Gentleman from Chicago, in a New York barber shop. Barber—"Will you have your hair cut, sir, when your shave is finished?" Chicago man—"No, thank you, I never have my hair cut in the country."

The Best Society.

"No company, or good company," was a motto given by a distinguished man to all his young friends. It was a motto he had always endeavored to follow as far as lay in his power, and it was a very wise one.

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Surely, if our visits have such an influence upon our characters for life, it should be a matter of serious importance to us in what families we allow ourselves to be intimate. Boys and girls form attachments very easily, and often with very little forethought. In this, as in all things else, you should not fail to take advice of those who are older and wiser, and never, never choose for a friend one against whom you have been warned by those who dearly love you. There are people whose very presence seems to lift you up into a better higher atmosphere. Choose such associates whenever it is in your power, and the more you can live in their society the better, for both mind and heart. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

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DEATH.

Out of the shadows of sadness,
Into the sunshine of gladness,
Into the light of the blest—
Out of a land very dreary,
Out of the world of the weary,
Into the rapture of rest.

Out of to-day's sin and sorrow,
Into a blissful to-morrow,
Into a day without gloom;
Out of a land filled with sighing—
Land of the dead and the dying—
Into a land without tomb.

Out of a land of commotion,
Tempest-swept oft as the ocean,
Dark with the wreck drifting o'er—
Into a land calm and quiet;
Never a storm cometh nigh it—
Never a wreck on its shore.

Out of the land in whose bowers
Perish and fade all the flowers—
Out of the land of decay—
Into the Eden where fairest
Of flow'rets—and sweetest and rarest—
Never shall wither away.

Out of the world of the wailing,
Thronged with the anguished and ailing,
Out of the world of the sad,
Into the world that rejoices—
World of bright visions and voices—
Into the world of the glad.

Out of a life ever lonesome,
Out of a land ever mournful,
Where in bleak exile we roam—
Into a joy-land above us,
Where there is a Father to love us—
Into "Our Home—Sweet Home."

Aunt Dorothy's Prediction.

Dorothy Pendleton sat alone in her garret-like room, stitching with weary and trembling fingers upon some work that was to help provide her daily bread. She had long passed her prime, and was a gray-haired, wrinkled old maid. Nevertheless, she possessed a warm heart and affectionate nature. Her brother's only child, Georgiana Pendleton, whose orphaned life had been blessed by her love and care, could testify to that.

Twilight deepened. Aunt Dorothy put up her work, and began the simple preparations for tea. The table was set for two. The tea-kettle was bubbling away on the fire in a small back room, when the door opened, and a young and fair-haired girl came hastily in.

"Georgiana, dear, how late you are," said the old maid; "and what upon earth have you got in that great bundle?"

"You shall know, aunty, all in good time," replied she, impetuously, removing her hat and shawl. "I want you to cut my hair off."

"Your hair, child!" exclaimed the old lady, with elevated hands and staring eyes.

"Yes, aunty, my hair. I have a new project. You are to be no longer a poor old drudge, and I a telegraph clerk to be stared at by impertinent young men. I intend to earn enough to keep us both, and at one-half the sacrifice of time and labor."

"By cutting off your hair, Georgie?"

"Yes, aunty; and before it gets so dark that you cannot see," and removing a few hair-pins, down fell a mass of golden, waving hair, and, kneeling at her aunt's feet, who, in her surprise, had dropped into a seat, she continued, "Come, Aunt Dorothy—for if you don't I shall, and you know I will haggle it terribly."

"There, there, child if you are determined, I will do it. But it is so sweetly pretty, and the loss will ruin your looks."

"Never mind my looks—and the hair will grow again."

"Well, if I must," returned the old lady, with set teeth and a heavy sigh.

In a few moments Georgiana Pendleton sprang to her feet, with shorn head, and a tiny shout of laughter pealed out as she saw herself in a glass, whilst her aunt was actually shedding tears over the bright web of hair she held in her hands.

"I shall be ready for tea presently, aunty," said the girl; and catching up the bundle she had deposited upon a chair when she came in, she retired to their little bed-room.

The old lady put the hair reverently away, and, wiping her dim old eyes, went again to the preparation of tea.

"Heaven bless us!" she exclaimed, dropping into her chair in an almost fainting condition.

The bedroom door had softly opened, and Georgie stood before her in boys' apparel, completely metamorphosed. That one exclamation was as far as Aunt Dorothy could go. In vain she attempted to speak. Surprise and consternation froze her tongue, while the girl strutted about, and laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"The mystery, aunty, is out. I saw an advertisement for a lad as copyist in a lawyer's office. The terms are liberal, and you know my greatest accomplishment is penmanship. I at once (as was wished) addressed them in my own handwriting; and among the many applications mine was selected as the most eligible, and an answer sent that I should call to-morrow at nine o'clock, when I am promised a trial. I signed my name George Pendleton, so you see I have only dropped the last syllable."

"Georgie," gasped Aunt Dorothy, "are you mad—so stark mad as to think of doing so immodest a thing as to go into the employment of a gentleman in—boys' clothes? And do you know it is against the laws, both civil and moral?" The floodgates of Aunt Dorothy's wrath were at last opened, and she could talk fast enough now. "I will never, never permit you to do such an awful thing."

"You must do it, aunty. I have left my old place, and can't go back. I drew all my money to get this outfit, and no one but ourselves will know it. We are in a new neighborhood. I have nothing to do but take my place daily at a desk and copy law-papers, for which I get three times as much as I did behind the counter. I know it is a shame that we poor working-women are not paid near as much as a half grown boy. And, again, you know, we have scarcely been able to pay our rent and purchase fuel and food, to say nothing of clothing. And daily your poor fingers are growing more stiff and lame with rheumatism. We had to leave our pleasant rooms in Sunnyside street for a lower-priced lodging, and a far less desirable neighborhood. Come, aunty, listen to reason," and Georgiana twined her arms about the neck of the poor old woman, who was now sobbing with a will, since she had no argument to advance.

"You will be detected, child, and disgraced—I know you will."

"I sha'n't. Never fear. I have given my age as fourteen, when you know I am eighteen, aunty; and of course my youth explains my beardless face. But I am starved. Let's have tea. After that pack my petticoats in the old blue chest, only to be brought forth again when I am once more Georgiana Pendleton."

Aunt Dorothy wiped her eyes, and tremblingly poured out the tea; and then another long discussion followed, but all to no purpose. The girl was firm as the rock. An adventurous and romantic spirit had been aroused that not all the reasoning in Christendom could allay.

Accordingly, at the appointed time, she found herself at the appointed place, climbing, with fast-beating heart, a long flight of stairs which led to a spacious corridor, upon every side of which were doors leading into offices. Upon one of them she read "Charles Waldo." She timidly rapped. A clerk opened it and admitted her into an inner office, where sat Mr. Waldo. He was neither young nor old, possessed black hair and eyes and a great bushy beard. He scarcely noticed the pretty blonde boy, except to remark his white hands, and that he looked altogether too frail for work. But as the refinement of his manners contrasted so strongly with other boys, who had driven him nearly distracted by their noisy and awkward ways, he resolved to give him a trial.

"I believe your name is George Pendleton?" he said.

"Yes, sir," timidly.

"Do you whistle?"

"Oh, no; never, sir."

"I am glad of it, for it is against office rules. That, with singing, has proved a cause for more than one competent boy being discharged from my employment. Here is your desk, and there are some papers I wish copied immediately. You may begin work at once. The wages are already settled, I believe."

Glad to escape further questioning, she retreated to her desk, and commenced writing. Mr. Waldo was all day completely engrossed with his clients and books and papers. He scarcely noticed the new boy, save when some directions were to be given. At night, when Georgiana was about to take her departure, he spoke kindly, and praised the quality of her work.

Aunt Dorothy spent the day in a state of the most feverish anxiety. She watered the little geranium in the cracked teapot on the window-ledge at least a dozen times, forgetting every time that it had been done before. Her work all went wrong, and had to be done over again. Her hands took to themselves such trembling fits that at last she had to give up sewing. But the long, lonely day finally came to an end, a quick, bounding step was heard upon the stairs, and Georgie came in with a laughing face that was quite reassuring.

"Oh, Aunt Dorothy," exclaimed she, "I am in clover. I have just the nicest place in the world—a neat little cubby hole all to myself of a room to write in, with the clerk's office on one side, and on the other side great glass doors leading to the office where Mr. Waldo receives all his clients. And then, aunty, he is such a quiet old block of wood. He has neither eyes nor ears for any one. If I did not whistle or sing, I might, for all notice he takes of me, spin on my head on the stool a good portion of the time."

"He is not a young man, then?" asked her aunt, with her face lighting up.

"Oh, no! He is old enough to be somebody's grandfather. But, aunty, I am very hungry. Is tea ready?"

In time, Aunt Dorothy got accustomed to Georgie's disguise. Things went on smoothly at the office. Every week she brought home the ample proceeds of her labor, and they had many a luxury unthought of before. Georgie had her long hair made into a chignon, and used to get back into her old clothes on Sunday, and, with the many additions to her wardrobe she was now able to afford, accompanied her aunt to church. If the neighbors (with whom they had nothing to do) noticed her at all, they supposed the proud old maid had a niece, also, who was somewhere out at service during the week.

Occasionally Georgie was sent out by her employer upon some errand, which proved a pleasant break to the monotony of office-work. But at last, when the winter came, and the bad weather set in, and Mr. Waldo had occasion to send her out as before, he did so without the slightest compunction. He regarded boys as nothing but ducks, anyhow, and a little wetting would not hurt them. Indeed, his experience taught him that they usually liked nothing better. But poor Georgie Pendleton was not made of the stuff he was used to; and, notwithstanding mackintosh and umbrella, the very next day after being so exposed she presented herself at the office with a very pale face and harsh cough. Aunt Dorothy had insisted upon binding a strip of flannel about her sore throat, almost hiding the natty little collar and tie she prided herself on.

Mr. Waldo expressed his regrets that she should be suffering from a cold, and the next moment became so engrossed in business as to forget all about her. She wrote away, with throbbing head and burning hand, until the nearest church clock clanged the hour of twelve. Then Mr. Waldo went out, as usual, to lunch, and poor Georgie, unable to eat her own, and too weary and sick to longer hold up her head, dropped it upon the desk, and was soon in a deep slumber.

Her employer returned presently, and quietly, as was his wont, and did not disturb her; but all at once he thought of her, and that it was but right to inquire if the illness still continued, and, if not, to permit a half-holiday.

"Poor child!" thought he, as he opened the door of the inner office, and took in the graceful attitude and flushed face of the beautiful sleeper.

"George," said he, placing his hand upon the burning temples, "you are indeed ill. You may go home until you feel better. I will supply your place for a day or two."

Opening her eyes with a sudden bewilderment, and starting to her feet, she attempted to speak, but suddenly failed. Then, raising one small white hand to her head, she gave one beseeching look up into his face, endeavored to take one step toward the door, staggered, and fell into his outstretched hands in a dead faint. Lifting her up, he placed her upon a lounge in the outer office, and applied restoratives.

Half an hour later, when she was again able to sit up, Mr. Waldo insisted upon sending her home in a cab, and bade her not attempt any more office duties until thoroughly restored.

"Meanwhile," he said, smiling pleasantly down into the flushed and tearful face, "your wages will go on; I can't afford to entirely break you down. You are invaluable, and must get well and strong, if it takes weeks or months."

Aunt Dorothy reigned supreme for the next few days. Herb teas were constantly simmering on the stove in the little back room, and the odor thereof penetrated every part of the house, and floated out into the street. But Georgie was at last declared in a state of convalescence. Every day some token of the kindness and generosity of Mr. Waldo came to them by the hands of a freckly-face boy, who informed Aunt Dorothy that he had been hired to run of errands and keep the office clean, "as the other boy wasn't strong enough."

One day, as he delivered a dozen great oranges, accompanied by a lovely basket of hot house flowers and kind inquiries as to how she was progressing, Georgie returned a note of thanks, and begged Mr. Waldo not to increase her obligations—that she was nearly well, and that in a day or two she would be able to resume work again.

THE HORSE OF THE FUTURE.

By conforming to the theories of Darwin, the hunting horse of the future will be developed like the above. You take a common horse, and feed him and his progeny for centuries at just as high a rack as he can reach to. You also keep his body constantly suspended about six inches from the ground, so there will be a constant effort to stretch out his legs. The result will be what our artist has depicted.

He read the note very attentively, and smiled as he deposited it in his pocket.

"So like," thought he, "the crude production of a boy of fourteen."

When Georgie at last went down to the office, she found her employer very attentive and kind, and disposed to favor her in every possible way. A week passed, then another, and the relics of her cold still clung to her in the shape of a troublesome cough, and she continued pale and thin. Mr. Waldo had watched her attentively every day with much kind solicitude, lightening her burdens by overworking his clerks or himself, and keeping a boy for errands. But it was all to no purpose. Georgie still grew more miserable.

Coming into the little sanctum where she was seated at her high desk, one day, Mr. Waldo placed his hand upon her golden, curly head, and gently told her that he thought she had better give up work for a time. A quick flush mantled her thin cheek, and her soft eyes were instantly filled with tears.

"I cannot, Mr. Waldo—indeed, I cannot. I must do something. My wages are all Aunt Dorothy and I have to live upon."

"But you are surely killing yourself, child. It will never do. Besides, it is breaking my heart to see you fading and dying in this way," he replied, stooping over her until his dark beard mingled with her sunny hair, and with his voice assuming a new tenderness. "You see, Georgie, I know all about you and your pretty disguise."

She drooped her scarlet face into her hands, and began shedding the bitter tears of mortification and shame.

"There, darling, don't cry," entreated he; "I do not blame you. There really seemed no other way to earn a comfortable living. Yet it was a perilous undertaking, and I thank God you fell into my hands. I fancied you a marvel of gentleness and refinement for a boy, and congratulated myself for having found such a prodigy. The afternoon you fainted in my arms I first suspected your sex."

Then, taking from his pocket a small hem-stitched handkerchief with the name of Georgiana written thereon, he continued: "If you would have preserved your disguise, you should have been more careful about leaving such proof upon your desk. The week following that you were ill I missed you sadly, and learned how fond I was growing of you. Since then you have completed my enthralment. Meanwhile I have taken particular pains to learn all I could about you, and the lovely young girl I saw last Sabbath walking to church with a withered old lady I presume to be 'Aunt Dorothy,' was no other than George Pendleton, my clerk. Go home now, my child; I will come and see you this evening, when we will talk over your future."

Once more he gently and caressingly stroked her bowed head, and went out, leaving her to shed a few burning tears before she could summon courage, and had strength to do as he had bidden her.

In Aunt Dorothy's arms she told her tale, and had received the assurance that she (the aunt) always told her so.

"I knew it would come to this, Georgie, and what can he think of you?"

The question, to Aunt Dorothy's surprise, rather calmed the girl, for she had reason to believe that he thought leniently and tenderly of her. Coming out of the bed-room dressed in her own rightful garb that evening, she looked very sweet. The pallor of her face was lighted by a lovely pink glow, born of the blush she felt would never die even after she was in her coffin. She would have given worlds if she could have forgotten the past few months. And yet she felt that she would not like to forget Mr. Waldo.

A little later, when Aunt Dorothy was in the back room washing the tea things, and Georgie reclining in an easy-chair, tired and weak, a rap at the door startled her. She felt her inability to rise and open it; so she bade the visitor enter, though in scarcely audible tones—her heart telling her who it must be.

Mr. Waldo came hastily toward her. She sank back, and covered her burning face with her slender hands. Taking a seat close beside her, he gently uncovered her face, and whispered, "No more shame nor tears, my dear little girl. It was all for the best, and I am very happy in my discovery, for I am needing a wife much more than a copying clerk. The latter I can get anywhere. But it is not so easy for an old bachelor like me to fall in love, as I have been doing in spite of myself these many weeks past. In short, Georgie, darling, I came to ask you to be my wife, to let me care for and shield you from the rude buffets of a hard world. There is no need to plead my love. You know how very dear you are to me."

"If," returned she, "you could look upon my conduct with half the shame and disgust that I do, I am certain you would despise me. And yet," suddenly lifting her face to him, "I am so grateful for your love. I feel so bruised and beaten, life looks so lonely, and the struggle so hard, that I am very glad of so noble a refuge. Are you sure you can forgive and forget my boldness?"

"There is no need, darling," he said, kissing many times her tear-stained and blushing face that now rested upon his shoulder. "You were ever modest and retiring, and were actuated by the noblest of motives."

Aunt Dorothy, coming in at this moment, was very much shocked at the position of the lovers. In a manly way, Mr. Waldo explained all, and asked her blessing upon the union.

"You are to live with us," said Georgie, as she followed her aunt to the bed where she had discreetly retired an hour previously. "And," she went on, in a perfect glow of confiding happiness—"and you are to be our housekeeper. He says I am to have no care. We are to have a pretty home at Norwood, and we are to go with him and select the furniture."

"When is it to be?" asked Aunt Dorothy, waking up to the proper degree of interest in these tidings.

"Oh, immediately!"

"You said, Georgie, that he was old enough to be your grandfather."

"Well, isn't he? Although he doesn't look so very old now—you know I am so much inclined to exaggerate."

"We are to have no more masquerading, I hope."

"No more! Henceforth I am Miss Georgiana Pendleton, your devoted niece, until I become Mrs. Waldo. You may burn your improper nephew, or sell him to the old clothes man."

"Mr. Waldo is a kind and honorable gentleman. I hope you will both be happy. So good night, and thank Heaven my prediction did not come true."

"All's well that ends well." But it was a dangerous experiment, and one not to be imitated. In nine times out of ten, such disguises end in sorrow and shame.

A STORY FOR STORY-TELLERS.

Three little neighbor children with our own two little folks made a happy group in the nursery.

Two good hours passed while I plied my needle in another room—no more penetrating sound reaching me from that quarter than now and then a peal of the merry child-laughter. There was a sense of peace all through the house—when suddenly my ears were smitten with a loud and bitter wail of "I want to go home! I want to see my mamma!"

I arose, dismayed, meeting my own little girl flying toward me on the way, her face pale and anxious, and "Oh, mamma, come! Lou is crying so!" There was the little group in the nursery, all subdued and sorrowful, gathered around the heart-broken six-year-old darling, who stood all shaking with sobs, with bright eyes overflowing, and little trembling hands trying to fasten the coat and tippet. I took her in my arms and tried to kiss her into comfort; but nothing would do, in this bitter extremity, but her own mamma, and the sobs and tears burst out afresh.

"Why, what is it, Lou; what is it, darling?" Still only, "I want to see my mamma!"

"Has anybody been unkind to you, Lou?" I asked, fearing that some quick word had wounded the sensitive heart.

"No, no."

"Haven't you been having a good time? Were you playing?"

"No. Nannie was reading. Oh, I want to go home."

So, puzzled and distressed, I fastened the warm wraps and let her go. Then my little daughter put her arms about my neck and said, "Mamma, I read such a dreadful, pitiful story; and it was that. Lou couldn't bear it. I wouldn't have read it if I had known what was coming. It was one of my Christmas books."

"Why, what was the story?" I asked.

"It was about a poor little girl burned to death; and there was another about a mamma who died, and then the papa didn't love the baby."

"Did nobody cry but Lou?" Then the chorus said, "We didn't cry," but said one, "it has made such an ache here"—putting her little hand on her baby heart. And another spoke of a bad feeling in the throat, and another was still with lips all a-tremble, and all the little faces were dim with trouble. So I took away the cruel book, sent my boy out of doors in the snow storm with his shovel, and suggested for the little girls a good game of housekeeping. And so the roses came back.

That night before the bed-time I took the book with the pretty binding, the burning taper on the cover and the graceful poem on its title-page dedicating all "to my daughter Florence," and asked my little girl to show me the sorrowful story. So I was pointed to "A Child's Tragedy."

I read it with quivering nerves—the horror of a fiery death to a golden-haired baby girl, drawn with graphic pen. Nothing spared—neither the torture of the slow death, nor the father's agony, nor the mother's overwhelming grief.

Because the beautiful story-book alluded to above was noticed in our columns, if we remember aright, with unqualified eulogy, it is necessary to say that in this view of telling dreadful things to children, we entirely agree. It has been a settled principle of action with us in the choice of entertainment for them, to avoid not only the terrible and the wicked, but even the sad incidents of this cruel world. True enough they may be, we all know that fiction cannot rival fact; but all the more imperative is it to keep the home nest free from their intrusion that the birdlings may grow strong in the heavenly air of peace and safety. Never little Red Riding Hood, never the Babes in the Wood, nor murderous Blue Beard. To hear them without harm a child must have a stolid brain and nerves of leather. American children generally are too excitable already—sensitively organized and with dangerously active imaginations. Therefore the old world nursery classics must be carefully used, with much skipping and suppression; and the same rule applied to the infinitely better books of modern days.

How did it happen then that in a book for children's reading, "A Child's Tragedy," full of unmitigated intolerable pain, could pass without remark? We would as soon thrust the tender hand into the blaze, as torture the tender heart by telling or allowing to be told such a tale of suffering. It is from the parent's point of view that the story is justifiable;—the parent whose part it is to contemplate such fearful possibilities, and guard against them. That story is for the mother's reading, not the child's. The pain of its perusal she can bear, and it may save her from a reality she could not bear. Every mother who delights to dress her children in cool white muslin for the summer days, should read and remember it. The little boy or girl so dressed, may importune her for fire-crackers, or to play at bonfire; and the next merry Fourth of July close for her in the horror of just such a tragedy.

SOCIAL USAGES.

There are some details of social usage that are so childish, and, withal, so inconvenient and burdensome, as to demand a public denunciation. Nobody likes them, everybody desires to be relieved of them, and all seem to be powerless to reform them. Their burdensomeness forms a serious bar to social intercourse, and their tendency is to drive some men and women out of society altogether, and to worry and weary those who remain subject to them.

A person is invited to an "informal" reception. Special pains may be, and often are, taken to impress him with the idea that such a reception is, indeed, "informal." The idea is very good. The proposition is to bring together a circle of friends in a familiar way, without expensive dress on the part of the guests, or an expensive entertainment on the part of the hostess. It is an attractive sort of invitation, but woe to the man or woman who accepts it according to its terms. The man and the woman who attend in anything but full evening dress will find themselves singular, and most uncomfortable. They have taken their hostess at her word, and find, instead of a party of familiar friends, who can sit down and enjoy an hour of social intercourse, a highly dressed "jam," which comes late and departs late, and which finds itself treated to an elaborate supper. People have, at last, learned that if there is anything that must be dressed for elaborately, it is an "informal reception," and that there is really no greater cheat than the invitation which called them together. The consequence is that we have no really informal gatherings of men and women in what we call "society."

Again, when we invite a guest to dinner at six, we expect him to come at or before that hour. It is counted the height of impoliteness for a guest to keep a dinner waiting a moment. This is just as it should be; but when we invite a guest at eight o'clock to a reception or a party, what then? Why, we do not expect him until nine, we do not ordinarily get him until half-past nine, and are not surprised at his entrance at any subsequent hour before the company breaks up. Why the rule should be good for the dinner that is not good for the assembly does not appear, except that in the case of the dinner it is a question of hot or cold soup that is to be decided. At eight the host and hostess are in their vacant rooms, be-gloved and waiting. They are there for an hour, wishing their guests would come. At last one makes his appearance, and with a guilty look whips up stairs. Then he waits until another joins him, and another, and another, and so at last he descends. All have lost the only opportunity they will have for a pleasant chat with those who have invited them—lost, indeed, the only chance they will have of a look at the flowers, the pictures and the enjoyment of an undisturbed chat, with comfortable seats and surroundings. All dread to be first, and so all wait, and thus thrust far into the night their hour of departure. The company that should be at home at eleven, and in bed at half-past eleven, do not find their beds until one the next morning.

To the man of business such hours as mingling in social life imposes are simply killing. They are the same to women who have family duties to perform. They wipe the bloom of youth from the cheeks of girls in from one to three seasons; and thus social life in the great cities, instead of being a blessing and a delight, as it should be, becomes a burden and a bore. Many are driven by considerations of health and comfort out of social life altogether, and those who remain rely upon the rest of summer to restore them sufficiently to stand another campaign. We submit that this is an unexaggerated representation of the present state of things, and protest that it demands reform.

Every hour that a man spends out of his bed after half-past ten at night is a violence to nature. They have learned this in Germany, where, in many towns, their public amusements terminate at half-past nine, and, in some cases, even earlier than this. It is in this direction that a reform should be effected in America, so far as every variety of public and social assembly is concerned. An invitation at eight should mean what it says, and be honored in its terms. In this way social life would be possible to many to whom it is now practically denied, and become a blessing to all.

It is not hard to institute a reform of this kind. All it wants is a leading; and half a dozen of our social queens could do the work in a single season. It used to be essential to a social assembly that a huge, expensive supper be served at its close, and this at an hour when no man or woman could afford to eat a hearty meal. We have measurably outlived this in New York. It is "quite the thing" now to serve light and inexpensive refreshments. The man who dines at six needs no heavy supper before he goes to bed. He not only does not need it, but he cannot eat it without harm. Its expensiveness is a constant bar to social life; and let us be thankful that this abuse, at least, is pretty well reformed already. Other abuses and bad habits can be reformed just as easily as this, because reform is in the line of the common sense and the common desire. The leading, as we have said, is all that is wanted, and when we commence another season such leading ought to be volunteered. Something surely ought to be done to make social life a recreative pleasure, and not a severe tax upon the vital forces as it is at present.—*Dr. J. G. Holland.*

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In those cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

WE cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

ALLIE asks: "1st. Is the pillar of salt, into which Lot's wife was turned in olden times, to be seen yet? 2d. Did the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once stand where the Dead Sea now is? 3d. What is the meaning of the word lexicographer? 4th. Is twice a number and as much again the same thing? 5th. What is the highest number there is? 6th. What is the meaning of the letters vs.? 7th. I have a bouquet of grasses to crystalize; will you tell me how to produce the different colors, such as red, green, blue, &c.?" 1st. We imagine it is not. 2d. It is so stated. 3d. It means a writer of dictionaries. 4th. They are the same. 5th. You might as well ask which will be the last day of eternity. Numbers, like time and space, are infinite. 6th. *Vs.* is an abbreviation of the Latin word *versus*, which means against. 7th. We cannot tell you. Perhaps some of our readers will give the desired information.

G. A. W., (Montgomery Co., Pa.,) asks: "1st. What causes black salts to settle in the bottom of the kettle in making soft soap, and what will remedy the same? 2d. What of my handwriting?" The "black salts" is a precipitate formed by the union of a portion of the alkaline element used in the manufacture of the soap with other substances. Scientifically speaking the soap itself is a salt, composed of a fatty acid, and the alkaline base. The "black salts" you speak of may be formed by the union of the potash with a portion of the vessel containing the soap, as potash is the strongest base known in chemistry. We can give no remedy for the prevention of the formation of such a precipitate. 2d. Fair.

SALLIE, (Pittsburgh,) writes: "Can you tell me where and how much a picture would cost, the name of which I think is The Village School-mistress Asleep? I only want it for a tableau, so I do not want a very nice one, nor a very dear one." We cannot give you any information concerning such a picture; but candidly we think that you had better give your attention to the School-mistress *question*, as you spelled dear with two e's, and signed yourself "Yours Respectively."

CLEOPATRA, (Clover Nook, Highland, Ills.,) asks: "1st. Which is the best method to prevent roaches from destroying bees? 2d. Where is the largest clock in the world, and by whom was it made? 3d. Where is the largest bell on record, and what is its weight? 4th. What length of time is required to learn telegraphing?" 1st. We know of nothing that will protect bees from such enemies. We never heard before that roaches were troublesome in that way. 2d. Probably the largest clock in the world is the great clock in the new Houses of Parliament at Westminster. We cannot give the maker's name. The pendulum is upwards of 18 feet long, and its bob weighs 600 pounds. 3d. The city of Nankin in China was anciently famous for the largeness of its bells, but they were afterward exceeded in size by those of the churches of Moscow, the largest of which is that given by the Empress Anne. Its weight is 432,000 pounds, and it is probably the largest in the world. It was broken by fire. 4th. It depends upon the facility of the learner. We have heard an experienced operator say that telegraphy could be learned by some in thirty days. Others would require a much longer time.

ANDROS, (Mt. Carmel, Ky.,) writes: "1st. Please tell me through your paper the origin of the word 'saddy,' which is sometimes used by children instead of 'thank you.' 2d. What do match manufacturers use to mix with phosphorus to keep it from burning when exposed to the air, and what else do they use in the composition put on the wood to make parlor matches? 3d. Would it cost much to start a match manufactory? 4th. How is my handwriting?" 1st. We are ignorant of the origin of the word, but confess to some curiosity to know. The dictionaries do not give it, and we are inclined to believe that it is a provincialism, the origin of which is not readily to be discovered. 2d. The inflammable mixture used in the manufacture of matches is composed of phosphorus and nitre, or phosphorus, sulphur and chlorate of potash, mixed with melted gum or glue. The proportions used are almost as various as the manufacturers are numerous. 3d. It would depend upon what scale such an establishment was started. An immense amount of capital is employed in the business in this country and Europe. 4th. Good; better than your spelling until we corrected the latter.

E. H. BRADY, (Philada.,) sends us the following legend, the interesting hair-snake question: "I have noticed in your answers to correspondents a word or two about the so-called 'hair-snakes.' If you will permit a remark here, I think I can throw a little light on this subject. When I was a school boy, this was a favorite amusement in the summer-time with the boys at school; it is done in this manner: you can take one or a dozen (the more the merrier) of horse-hairs, and roll or tie them in a knot and put them in a pool of water where the sun will shine on it, and in a few days you will see some twisting and wriggling that is really surprising to look at. I have seen this phenomenon an hundred times, and have made hair-snakes by the hundreds and the pounds. One of your correspondents says that a coal head and eye come on the snake. This of course is an error; the end of the hairs assumes a sort of a phosphorescent brilliancy, but it is not so. The mystery about the hair-snake has been removed long ago; it is nothing but the animalcule that congregate in the hair, as horse-hair, as well as the human hair, is tubercles and hollow, and these little animals get in the hair and then they probably squirm to get out, and seemingly the hair turns into a snake—when it is nothing only what I assert here; and the idea that it is a real snake is amusingly absurd."

MAY GIBSON. You must excuse us for not answering your question. We are not in the dressmaking business.

"BUCKSKIN" asks: "Has a postmaster a right to open any packages coming to his office which are directed to other persons? I do not refer to letters." Any yet packages should be done up so that, without opening them, the postmaster could determine their contents, and judge if the proper postage has been paid.

ELMA, (Norristown, Pa.,) writes: "Please enlighten me on this point: There is a piece of statuary, representing a woman enwalled by the wrist in a block. Who is she, and why is she thus chained? Where can I find the story?" Probably it is the "Greek slave." There is no story connected with it, save as the name tells a story.

D. W., (Prattsburg,) asks: "1st. Which is the most densely populated country of Africa? 2d. How is New Orleans pronounced?" 1st. It is not certainly known; probably the vast interior region of Soudan. 2d. New Or-leans. Some men, but less correctly, New Or-leens'. We translate a few of the French words and phrases which you send us with that request. We give only those that are frequently met with in English works and writings, *sans reproche* means without reproach; *adieu*, let us go, or come on; *chasseur*, a huntsman, or one of a body of light cavalry; *sans doute*, without doubt.

DORIS EASTON, (Augusta, Maine,) writes: "1st. What is the best system of shorthand writing now in use? Do you think it is possible to gain a knowledge of phonography—I mean a knowledge that would enable one to become a successful newspaper reporter—by means of books alone, without a teacher? A Professor of, of New York, advertises a system of phonography, whereby one may be able to write 180 words per minute in one month's time. 2d. What is the meaning of 'Excelsior,' the title of a poem of Swinburne's beginning—

'Take hands and part with laughter,
Touch lips and part with tears'?

3d. Who is the author of an Euclid story entitled "Notice to Quit?" It was published by the Harpers several years ago, but it fell into my hands minus title-page and covers, so I am left in the dark concerning the parentage. 4th. I am much interested in the correspondents' column, and invariably turn thereto the first thing on opening the POST. There is a vast fund of good information contained therein, and I think this volume of intelligence could be much enlarged if those guiding youngsters, of both 'permanent' as Artemus Ward would say, who have heart-rending tales of love and misery to 'unfold,' and 'ask advice through the column, could only be persuaded to confide their amatory grievances to their sympathizing mammas, instead of pouring them into the public ear. Furthermore, if those ambitious ones who are eternally harping on this string, 'How's my handwriting?' would go to the nearest well-known, much valuable space might be reserved for *weightier* folks." 1st. It might be possible to a very few, but we would advise that the aid of a competent instructor be secured. We should not expect to advance quite so rapidly in the art as the New York professor says is possible. 2d. Excelsior means mere twaddle; grammatical theory: some believe. 3d. We do not know. 4th. We permit you to have your say respecting the character of some of the communications we receive and notice in the correspondents' column. But what may be little or nothing, or tiresome and distasteful to you, may be of momentous interest to others. You misconceive the quality of human nature when you imagine that "useful information" is other than all we are considering when our correspondents query. We counsel trust and confidence in juvenile, as you have probably observed, but never—only those parents are unimpressionable on subjects of the dearest and most vital interest to their children, and do you know how the lone and troubled heart sometimes hungers for advice, comfort and support—even a stranger's? As to the handwriting matter, we freely grant you your ills at it.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]